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# THE NATIONAL HISTORY OF FRANCE

EDITED BY

FR. FUNCK-BRENTANO

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY J. E. C. BODLEY

## THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE 1789—1809

CHECKED 25 APR 1958

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EDITED BY FR. FUNCK-BRENTANO

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY J. E. C. BODLEY

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THE NATIONAL HISTORY OF FRANCE

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# THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

178<sup>9</sup>—1809

BY  
LOUIS MADELIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY  
E. F. BUCKLEY

VOL. I



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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROVISIONAL CONSULATE

The first session. The Ministers. The attitude of the public towards the *coup d'état* of Brumaire. Preliminary measures. Finance. Clemency the order of the day. "Neither victors nor vanquished." All measures are provisional. Public confidence gradually restored. The first ray of light. Sieyès drafts a Constitution. It is completely remodelled by Bonaparte. The Constitution of the year VIII. "Bonaparte is in it." The plebiscite.

AT half-past ten on the morning of the 20th Brumaire of the year VIII (the 12th of November, 1799) a perfectly plain carriage, with a simple escort of six dragoons, drew up at the Luxembourg. From it alighted a slim, alert little man, with a bearing at once careless and self-confident. It was General Bonaparte, who on the previous day had been elected provisional Consul at Saint Cloud, together with Sieyès and Roger Ducos, members of the late Directory of the Republic.

He remained for an hour in close consultation with Sieyès, deeming it politic to humour this erstwhile Canon of Chartres, who had become the high priest, not to say the oracle of the Revolution. Presently they were joined by Ducos, and at midday the three Consuls left Sieyès' apartments and crossed the squares to a salute of drums, as they made their way to the hall, where for the last five years the members of the late Directory had been tearing each other's eyes out.

The ex-Abbé Sieyès, who ever since 1789 had been sitting on a tripod, hoped to occupy the presidential chair. But Ducos, who was already under the thumb of "the General," remarked to the latter as he came in, "There is no need to elect a President; you have a right to the position!" Bonaparte felt the insult to the pride of the unfortunate Sieyès, and though he took the chair, he forthwith proposed that each of the three Consuls should play

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the part of President in turn, and for twenty-four hours be head of the Government. As a matter of fact, it was the General who was destined to be the guiding spirit, but in order to satisfy the vanity of the mistrustful pontiff, he immediately, with a great show of deference, entrusted him with the task of drafting the new Constitution.

The next step was to appoint the Ministers. Bonaparte made Berthier, his Chief of Staff, Minister of War, an appointment which was not only a measure of security for himself but would also be popular with the Army. The Ministers. Then with a view of acknowledging the support given by the Institute to the revolution of Brumaire, he made Laplace Minister of the Interior, with the result that the number of gross blunders which an astronomer turned Minister could make in a few days soon became patent to all. Justice was entrusted to the care of Cambacères, the great lawyer of the Convention, the Police to Fouché, who always contrived to survive the gravest crises, and Foreign Affairs to Reinhard, on the understanding, however, that the appointment should be temporary and the office be shortly restored to "Citizen Talleyrand-Périgord," who had been dismissed a few weeks previously by the Directory and had taken his revenge by supporting the large body that was urging on Bonaparte against that sorry Government.

The main subject of discussion was the Treasury, which, as we shall see, was in the last stages of bankruptcy. Sieyès proposed that Gaudin should be made Minister of Finance. He had been a clerk in the *Contrôle Général* and was a skilled accountant. Without further ado he was appointed to control what was aptly termed "the public misfortune." At the end of this prolonged sitting the Consuls separated, and the General returned to his house in the Rue de la Victoire.

A few hours earlier in the morning, when his carriage had driven through the streets of Paris, it had aroused only a certain benevolent curiosity; but on its return it was greeted with cheers, the reason being that during that 20th Brumaire the great city had more or less made up its mind regarding the outcome of the *coup d'état* of the previous day.

The news of the fall of the Directory had indeed pleased almost everybody; but the public was rather tired of days which, ever

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**Attitude of  
the Public.**

since the 14th of July, 1789, had all been declared to be days of "liberation," but which had merely meant the supplanting of one faction by another and the adding of tyranny to disorder.

The people were obviously inclined to place their trust in the victor of Rivoli, the peacemaker of Campo-Formio; but this did not mean that they regarded the Revolution as ended; they hoped and prayed, but they were also afraid. "Satisfaction is tinged with suspicion," wrote a certain lady who watched the course of events. And indeed we shall see how much persevering effort was required on the part of Bonaparte before this timorous trust was gradually strengthened and eventually developed into full confidence.

Nevertheless the feeling of relief became more widespread on the evening of the 20th and even more so on the following day. *Rentes*, which, significantly enough, had fallen on the eve of Brumaire to the incredible figure of 11 francs, rose on the 20th to 14, on the 21st to 20, and before long recovered to 60. This was better than all the cheers and acclamations in the world!

\* \* \* \* \*

Bonaparte was anxious to get on as quickly as possible and to postpone his great plan for arbitration and reconstruction until the Constitution had been voted and the period of provisional Government was over.

The most urgent task with which he was faced was to deal with the deplorable condition of the Treasury. The Directory had left the finances of the country in a state of ruin. **The Treasury.** never surpassed by any Government before or since. In order to raise money it had made the Legislative Councils impose the infamous Forced Loan, the detestable nature and piteous futility of which I have already described.<sup>1</sup> Its only result had been that on the 17th Brumaire the country, which at that time was one of the richest in the world, found itself in the unprecedented position of having only 177,000 *livres* in its coffers, all that remained of an advance of 300,000 francs extorted on the previous day from the pockets of reluctant financiers. The growing deficit was aggravated by the fact that people no

<sup>1</sup>Louis Madelin, *The French Revolution*, pp. 591-593.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

longer paid their taxes in a country which, as we shall see, was struggling in the last throes of anarchy.

To remedy such a state of affairs something more than a clever financier was required ; the situation called for an able administrator, a man of sound sense and cool judgment. "Gaudin is no genius," observed the Emperor after ten years of constant intercourse with him, "but he knows a thing or two !" And in his mouth this was, as we shall see, the highest possible praise.

The first step to be taken was to abolish the Forced Loan, "an enactment which is a disgrace to the country," said Gaudin. This "disastrous system" was replaced by a tax of 25 per cent on the total contribution of the taxpayer, a levy which was the same for all and not progressive, and constituted a return to the principles of 1789. It was to be the beginning of the "purification" (never was the expression better justified) of the public finances. But as meanwhile it was necessary to supply the immediate needs of the day, the authorities were still committed to expedients, already used by the Directory. Whereas in the latter case, however, they had been regarded as vain and miserable subterfuges, they were now accepted as right and legitimate measures, because confidence, a factor indispensable to all sound government, had changed everything. The new leaders had secured the confidence of the people; it was their duty not to abuse it but, on the contrary, to strengthen it by the measures they adopted.

\* \* \* \* \*

This they endeavoured to do. The purification of the finances was not enough; it was a matter of purifying public opinion by

Law of  
Hostages  
Rescinded.

means of pacificatory measures intended to show what the policy of a Bonaparte would shortly be able to accomplish. With a stroke of the pen he did away with the outrageous Law of Hostages,

passed by the Councils three months previously, a measure which was even more iniquitous than the Law of Suspects, for, as the authors of it themselves confessed, it struck down the innocent to punish the "guilty."<sup>1</sup> To make it perfectly plain that he was responsible for the step, the General himself immediately hastened

<sup>1</sup>The French Revolution, p. 593.

## THE PROVISIONAL CONSULATE

to the Temple in order to release some of the unfortunate hostages, who were relatives of Royalists.

It was Bonaparte, too, who made the policy of clemency prevail in a very different connection. Sieyès, whom ten years of révolution

had inured to the idea of proscriptions, had on the 20th extorted from the General an order aimed against several of those who, on the previous day, had hurled threats at his head in the Orangerie, or had supported the demand for a decree of outlawry against him. The General, after allowing the order to remain in abeyance for three days, had it rescinded. The Jacobin opposition apparently collapsed forthwith. The histories mention a certain Barnabé, President of the Yonne tribunal, as being one of the few to protest and to refuse to take the oath, but none of them tell how, three months later, when this Brutus had become destitute, he was restored to his office and took the oath—without any further display of exalted virtue. This was typical of the new spirit—neither victors nor vanquished !

Bonaparte was all the more anxious to calm these Jacobins, who were suspicious of all he did, because just at this time he was endeavouring to pacify the West. Here, too, as is well known, the absurd policy of the Directory had reopened a wound which, ever since 1793, had been a running sore in the side of France. La Vendée—"that stomach-ache of the Republic," as Hoche called it—had again risen in rebellion in Vendémiaire of the year VIII, and had been supported by almost the whole of the West. General Hédouville, who had been sent to Anjou by the Directory, was experiencing considerable difficulty in keeping the "Chouans" in check. They had cherished hopes which Brumaire had inevitably dashed to the ground. "If only we had had Bonaparte," they declared, "we should have been the masters." Through the medium of Madame Turpin de Crisse, a woman who though "sly as a fox" was kind at heart, Châtillon, Antichamp and Bourmont consented to enter into negotiations. But the trouble was too deep-seated and Bonaparte's position was

still too precarious for anything more than a truce to be made. It was signed on the 3rd Frimaire. As we shall see, the more settled state of affairs that resulted so strengthened the General's hand that he was able

Peace in  
the West.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

to turn the armistice into a treaty which, at long last, secured peace in the West.

\* \* \* \* \*

Everywhere the provisional nature of the settlements prevented the man of the moment from deriving all the advantages he had hoped from the revolution of Brumaire. All he could do was to make rough outlines of plans and projects. True, public confidence was already growing, but it could not be completely restored as long as the new Government remained on an insecure basis.

This was made abundantly clear by the attitude adopted by foreign countries towards another felicitous step—the offer of a general peace. Bonaparte was doubtless too much of a realist to imagine that mere overtures would be sufficient to demolish the wall which so many grievances, such deadly hatred and such varied passions had raised between France of the Revolution and the coalition of Europe. All hope of securing an honourable peace from the two chief enemies of the country—England and the House of Austria—or any attempt to make the Tsar Paul sever his alliance with them, had to be postponed until such time as it was possible to speak in the name of a properly established Government. But through Prussia, who had been neutral since 1795, and constituted the only door of communication with Europe, the various Governments were informed that the new rulers of France were resolved to have done with the blundering

Armistice  
with Austria.

policy of the Directory. Whilst Russia and England still remained in an attitude of expectant hostility, an armistice concluded with Austria on the Rhine seemed, in view of the fact that only a few weeks previously an invasion of French territory from that quarter had been expected, to constitute a faint ray of light heralding peace between the nations.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was necessary to dwell at some length on the events of Brumaire and Frimaire of the year VIII, during which the policy which was shortly to prevail was being outlined in all its branches. "Hours big with destiny," writes Albert Sorel. Wherefore the pen of the historian lingers lovingly on them.

## THE PROVISIONAL CONSULATE

Public opinion still remained favourable though unsettled. The Brumarians; all of them men who had played a part in the Revolution, had indeed proclaimed through the mouth of Citizen Boulay de la Meurthe their intention of setting up a "National Government," but they were not all as good as their word. Immediately after Brumaire the Catholics showed signs of trying to rid themselves of the odious yoke the Directory had placed round their necks, whereupon the more prominent members of the Government, headed by Laplace and Fouché, heaped the most violent abuse on their heads, referring in true Directory style to "the old sacerdotal despotism" and "disgraceful superstition." And the reactionary movements which began to break out in the provinces were drastically dealt with. "Superstition will be given no better reason for welcoming the changes due to the 18th Brumaire than Royalism has had," wrote Laplace to the various departmental administrations. As a matter of fact the Royalists showed no signs of activity; all they did was to cherish vague hopes, muttering something about "Monk," and dubbing the Consulate the "*Pont Royal*."

But unlike the disorganised political parties, the masses were genuinely and unequivocally delighted. "The people who are really devoted to you," wrote Lannes to Bonaparte, "are all who love peace, the landed proprietors, the mass of the nation." In every class a spirit of cheerfulness suddenly became apparent, at first tinged with anxiety, but speedily transformed by the first actions of the Consul into that "mad enthusiasm" with which the embittered Necker, in his retreat at Coppet, taunted his own daughter, Germaine de Staël.

Nevertheless, Bonaparte resolutely adhered to the course he had marked out for himself. It was imperative not to allow any precipitate action on his part to jeopardise the policy he intended to follow. "There are many matters," he remarked to Roederer, "for which ten years will be barely sufficient." Until such time as it would be possible for him to take definite action he confined himself to words, and all he said was calculated to confirm his determination not to identify himself with any particular party. "Bonaparte is credited with having made a declaration which strikes a new courageous note in revolutionary times," wrote one of the newspapers; "he has announced that positions will be

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open to Frenchmen of every shade of opinion provided that they are men of enlightenment, capacity and virtue. If this statement is really true and the man who made it keeps his word, the Revolution is indeed over."

But the pessimists—and there are always pessimists everywhere—began to croak that the country was doomed to disappointment. "If peace is not made before a month has passed," wrote Barante, a future Prefect, to his son, also a future Prefect, "all the adulation in the world will not prevent the fall of the hero—and covered with ridicule, to say the least." Even Talleyrand, who saw a great deal of the Consul, was perplexed. True, he added: "If he can hold out for a year, he will go far!"

But could he do so? Yes, if now that he was in power, he was not confined to half measures. But the Government had to be established on a firm basis and for this it was necessary for the Constitution to be settled.

\* \* \* \* \*

The task of drafting it was making slow progress, for it was Sieyès, as we know, who was entrusted with this "great task."

**Sieyès drafts a Constitution.** This cold and solemn individual was credited with having had the ideal Constitution locked away in his head for the last ten years. But the ex-Canon had never committed himself to paper, and what he said was frequently obscure, which no doubt accounted for the fact that until 1799 his ideas were held to be extremely profound. The legislative Commissions, appointed during the night of the 19th-20th Brumaire, had themselves elected a "Section" to deal with the Constitution, and Sieyès had been summoned before it to make his position clear. But it took ten days to extract bit by bit from his lips the new law, "Confidence should come from below, authority from above." This was the principle which he first solemnly enunciated, adding that he had borrowed it from the Dutch philosopher, Baruch Spinoza. This constituted the ideological side of Joseph Sieyès' thought. But it had another—the political side. I have already described how for the past six years a sort of revolutionary oligarchy had been in existence which was trying to keep itself in power at all costs.<sup>1</sup> Sieyès was one of its most

<sup>1</sup>*The Revolution*, pp. 468-470.

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important members, and he was firmly resolved that the aim of the Constitution should be definitely to install in power not a man, but a coterie. This being so, the name of Baruch Spinoza served to mask an important manœuvre on the part of a politician.

The "people" whose votes the "revolutionaries in power" had been pleased cynically to annul three times in five years, were once and for all to be deprived of the right of election, or rather, while a pretence was made of restoring universal suffrage, "the Nation" was only to be allowed to appoint *candidates* ("confidence should come from below") from whom a "constitutional jury," set up without any semblance of popular election, and which would eventually develop into the *Senate*, was to make its choice ("authority comes from above"). The electors—all the citizens of over twenty-one years of age—were to draw up a *List of Notables* of various degrees of standing, from whom the jury were to pick whomsoever they pleased to be members of the two Assemblies—the *Tribunate*, whose business it would be to debate Bills, and the *Legislative Body*, which was to pass them. So much for the legislative side. On the executive there was to be a *Grand Elector*, who was to appoint two *Consuls*, one for "peace" and the other for "war."

The sole function of the *Grand Elector*, an extremely august office, which carried with it a yearly grant of six million francs, would be to fill up any gaps in the ruling body. If he showed any signs of overstepping the bounds of this mediocre position and playing an active and therefore dangerous part, the Senate was to be allowed to absorb him by making him a member of its own body. The same applied to the two *Consuls*. Thus the Senate, consisting of old revolutionaries, would be the real master of the State.

A cunning contrivance! But would it work?

Moreover, the French people were at this time inclined, or rather resigned, to the abdication of some of their rights, provided it was in favour of a strong Government, embodied in a man of action, and not for the benefit of a detested patriciate.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bonaparte kept himself well informed regarding the lines on which the constitutional "sections" were working. In the

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secret bosom of the Commissions Sieyès was with considerable difficulty being delivered of his wonderful Constitution, whilst a nation, quivering with impatience, was waiting for a strong Government to be set up and save it from the dissolution threatening.

Quivering with impatience! So was Bonaparte! The information sent to him by the agents he had despatched to the provinces proved to him that the country was in the throes of the most terrible anarchy due to the disorder and discord everywhere prevalent. And he was anxious to put an end to both. But what powers were to be placed at his disposal?

It was possible for him to act only if he were given the foremost place and full governmental authority. And he decided to convey as much to Sieyès through the mouth of Roederer. Sieyès, impressed by the resolute tone of the request, offered him the post of Grand Elector, taking good care, however, to explain its nature. The General met the offer with a torrent of abuse. He who wished to govern only in order to resort to action, was asked to play the part of *roi fainéant*, "a stuffed pig wallowing in a few millions"! By this brutal candour, he smashed to atoms one portion at least of Sieyès' famous Constitution. But he did more, and, appearing in person, he declared that a "metaphysical" conception, which would organise nothing but a state of paralysis, was utterly futile.

Sieyès, mortified, made a show of descending from his tripod and packing off to the country. At first Bonaparte seemed inclined to acquiesce, but he changed his mind. The idea of a List of Notables which, while apparently making universal suffrage the basis of the whole system, really deprived the people of all power, suited the future Emperor's book fairly well. He studied the famous Bill carefully, and was more inclined to turn it to his own account than to tear it to bits. He consented to a reconciliation with Sieyès, made a show of sympathy with his ideas, prevailed upon him to have the "sections" dealing with the Constitution summoned to the Luxembourg, and for three long evenings himself expedited their labours by doing a large share of the work. He accepted the List of Notables, the transference of the real right of election from the people to the Senate, as the supreme head of the Constitution, and

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the institution of two Assemblies, the Tribunate, which was to talk without voting, and the Legislative Body, which was to vote without talking. But he added a Council of State, which, appointed by the Executive, was to be called upon to draft Bills. He abolished the office of Grand Elector, however; there were to be three Consuls, but to save the Government from the fatal handicap of having power vested in several persons at once, he so contrived matters that, since two of these magistrates were to have only a "consultative voice," all real power should fall into the hands of the First Consul. "His word shall be law." "These five words," wrote Albert Vandal; "sealed the destiny of France."

Sieyès now apparently lost all interest. But Bonaparte had certain reasons for wishing him to put his name to this Constitution, utterly differently though it was from the one he had had in view. And he won him over once more by making him President of the future Senate—a rich benefice—and furthermore giving him and Roger Ducos the right of nominating fifty-one per cent of the members of the Upper House. These compensations were too much for Sieyès, and he gave way.

Everything was so expeditiously carried through that by the evening of the 10th Frimaire all discussion was at an end and the Constitution settled. Whereupon the General insisted on the "sections" that had been summoned immediately proceeding to the election of the three Consuls. That Bonaparte himself was to be one of them nobody would have dared openly to question; that he wished to have Cambacérès and Lebrun as colleagues (I will explain why presently) was also beyond dispute. The vote was taken, but the General, probably gathering from the expression on the faces of some of the electors that they were not unanimous, suddenly swept aside the voting papers which had been collected, and turning towards the illustrious Sieyès, begged him, with a great show of deference, to nominate the three Consuls. Sieyès, more frightened than flattered, uttered the three names for which the General was waiting. And thus at eleven o'clock on the night of the 20th Frimaire the Consulate was ready to enter into office.

Three Consuls  
Appointed.

\* \* \* \* \*

It still remained for the Constitution as well as the choice of the

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Consuls to be submitted to the plebiscite. But a sort of second little *coup d'état* was carried out, and it was decided that in view of the extreme urgency of the matter the Constitution was to come into operation at once—this was afterwards confirmed by the law of the 3rd Nivôse—and that the Consuls who had been elected should forthwith take up their duties.,

The Constitution, while thus awaiting confirmation by the popular vote, was proclaimed by the municipal officials to the beat of drums in all the Paris squares. Crowds surged everywhere, for as one report had it, "everybody was hoping to find in it a pledge of the peace and happiness, safety and liberty, the elusive shadows of which we had been chasing for eleven years." This was hard on the Revolution! The next day one of the newspapers reported that a woman had said to her neighbour: "I haven't heard anything." "I haven't lost a single word!" replied her friend. "Well, what is there in the Constitution?" "Bonaparte's in it!" was the reply. And they both jumped for joy.

As a matter of fact, the people were never able to make head or tail of all this fuss about the Constitution. Was Bonaparte the chosen leader and had he been armed with the power to rule? If the answer was in the affirmative, the people were content—every class and nearly every party. Before long the Constitution and the choice of the Consuls were confirmed by a vote of 3,011,007, while the adverse vote was reduced to the ridiculous figure of 1,562. This meant the support of the masses. The soldiers acclaimed their military chief and cheered him to the echo. He was their "Little Corporal"! The artisans acclaimed the man who had had their workshops running again for the past three weeks, and the peasants the leader who, by the restoration of authority, guaranteed the new tenure of land. One and all expected him to restore order and harmony, peace at home and peace abroad; they expected it from him and him alone. And indeed he was the one man who could accomplish the task. So the people voted with alacrity for the Constitution of the year VIII, unintelligible though it was, because "Bonaparte was in it."

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—N.B. Needless to say I shall refer at the end of the chapters only to the most important of the documents and books which I have used; a

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complete list of all the works I have consulted would merely fill up the space at my disposal to the detriment of the text. One day I shall no doubt give a more complete bibliography of these works. Moreover, I have been able to make use of a certain number of unpublished manuscripts, the source of which I cannot at present disclose, but which I am waiting to mention when my far more important work on the *Consulate and the Empire* is published.

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## CHAPTER II

### FRANCE IN THE YEAR VIII

Disorder everywhere owing to discord everywhere. Dissensions. The Parties. Religious differences. The insecure tenure of property. Complete stoppage of work. The artisans. The peasants. The moral outlook. The people sick of phrases. Their devotion to the Revolution; the worship of Equality; patriotism; the public lands. The demand for a man. Monk or Cæsar? The War. The desire for peace, but a peace safeguarding the conquests. The rise of Bonaparte when his hour had come.

**O**N the 4th Nivôse, as First Consul for a period of ten years, Bonaparte at last found himself in a position to satisfy the aspirations of France together with his own. From that moment, to use the words of a contemporary,—"the Revolution became incarnate." The Revolution? Nay, it was the entire nation that became one in the person of a single man. For the next fifteen years he was to remain in the forefront, with powers that increased every day. But his advent to power, and even more his retention of power, are inexplicable unless we bear in mind what both France and Bonaparte were during these first few months of the year VIII.

All Hopes  
centred in  
Bonaparte.

The country expected everything from the Man. And because everywhere there was chaos, lack of unity, neglect and war, France longed for the restoration of order, harmony, work, peace, and, above all, authority.

Everything was chaos!

Chaos in the State confounded by the factions that had seized hold of it, breaking its springs and distorting its functions; chaos in the various administrative departments, which deprived alike of all energy and coherence exercised tyranny without securing obedience, and by sowing injustice reaped revolt; chaos in the public funds, with

Chaos  
Everywhere.

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bankruptcy, under the hypocritical title of *consolidation*, raised to the rank of a political doctrine, with credit ruined by the most frenzied inflation, the Treasury empty and taxable property exhausted ; chaos in Paris where everything was at sixes and sevens ; chaos in the provinces where the civil war had turned five hundred cantons into " a noisome camp, a cesspool of rapine and murder " ; chaos in most of the towns where " the white scum and the red scum " were still seething ; chaos on the highways, those wonderful royal roads of the old days which, after ten years of revolution, had become unrecognisable quagmires ; chaos in the economic sphere where, with the ports rapidly becoming blocked, the canals becoming silted and the roads breaking up, industry and commerce were ruined, while, owing to lack of confidence in the future, the land, after a vain attempt at recovery, was ceasing to be tilled ; chaos in the Army from which, after the recent defeats aggravated by mutinies, thousands of soldiers were deserting, while rivalry between its leaders put the coping-stone to its troubles ; chaos in the Church which the *constitutional* schism had cut in two and the utter ruin of which had been brought about by the persecution aimed against it by the Directory in its efforts to *de-Christianise* this " stronghold of the saints " ; chaos in Society, made up as it was of vulgar parvenus, *nouveaux riches*, frenzied jobbers, barefaced women and shameless men whose flagrant amusements constituted an insult in the face of the growing want of a proletariat, their ranks swollen by the "*anciens riches*" who had lost all ; chaos in the family, ravaged by divorce, undermined by the disorganisation of public education and threatened with total ruin by the absence of all sense of duty and discipline ; and, worst of all, chaos due to the general confusion of mind, heart, conscience and will, and the callousness of public opinion in the face of the gravest dangers. While seven years previously the country had been burning with patriotism, it now made a joke of the most odious *coups d'état* and even of the defeats of the national armies.

This may seem an exaggeration. But two hundred pages of Albert Vandal, full to overflowing with facts, would provide the answer to any such charge, did not the thousands of documents collected by Alphonse Aulard in his *Paris sous le Directoire* supply crushing proof that anarchy was universal.

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The disorder was to a large extent due to the discord that prevailed and grew worse every day "during those terrible revolutionary years," writes the *Gazette de France*, "when metaphysical systems raised barriers alike between those who understood them and those who did not."

And indeed, created as much by events as by doctrines, discord was also rampant everywhere. Political, social and religious differences had, after ten years, left a thousand and  
**Dissensions.** one open wound. France was full of proscribers and proscribed, while even in the smallest villages the reign of violence had led to the formation of two camps, that of the executioners and that of the victims. In the year VIII hatred and rancour were still at their height. If a party gained the upper hand once more it would again demand its toll of blood. On the eve of Brumaire had not the "Red Terror" showed signs of reviving, and if it had done so, it would certainly have led to counter-revolution and a "White Terror."

The fires of political hatred were fed by religious differences which did more than anything else to spread and keep them alive, for while it was not every place that could boast of a Club, a church was to be found in the smallest village. And if by any chance a church got the better of its rival, what terrors were let loose! Few indeed cared to lay themselves open to the vengeance and excommunication that followed.

Another element conducive to civil war was the state of property. Nearly everywhere it had changed ownership; as  
**Property.** a matter of fact it had two owners, the *émigré* or the body that had been despoiled, and the buyer, who had paid for it with *assignats* but did not feel secure in the possession of his disputed territory. This constituted as it were a state of latent civil war which the least breath might turn into social war.

Thus discord was everywhere prevalent, sheltering itself behind those systems which, as the journalist ironically observed, "raise barriers alike between those who understand and those who do not."

In this general confusion all work was at a standstill—the sorry child of sorry parents. Work can run smoothly only in time of civil peace and order. The artisan had thrown himself more

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whole-heartedly than anybody into the devastating political movement and had lost his strength and balance ; whereupon that state of anarchy had supervened which, as I have already said, destroyed the economic life of the country. Almost everywhere works were lying idle. In Paris—to give but one example—the number of workmen had fallen since 1791 from 7,053 to the miserable number of 1,722 in 1799, and before long Bonaparte in a state of alarm declared that at St. Quentin “factories that had once employed 10,000 hands were now working with only a sixth of that number.” Those who were still working were working short time, and what struck foreigners most in 1799 was the “idleness of the people” in a country which had worked so hard for the last two hundred years.

None the less, as soon as the great political upheaval was over, most of the workers complained of having nothing to do. They often had to go hungry and had hitherto put the blame on the Convention ; they had risen in revolt—“empty bellies *versus* full bellies”—for which they had been brutally repressed and, under the Directory, had sunk into a state of despair. They believed that Bonaparte would give them work, and this was all they asked for.

The peasant had never had any aspirations beyond work. In 1789, his lands were enfranchised, and between 1791 and 1795 he acquired possession of his holding or increased it, with the result that for a time a period of fruitful enterprise seemed to have been inaugurated. But is it possible to be enthusiastic about cultivating the land when the work is carried on without any sort of security ? This sense of insecurity led to a spirit of uneasiness which did much to damp the first flush of ardour for work, due to the enfranchisement and partition of the land. “If the peasants are taking an interest in politics,” one of the first Prefects afterwards wrote, “it is only in so far as politics deal with their own interests.” It was essential that these interests should be safeguarded, in which case the fields were ready to provide the peasant with all he wished to obtain from them if only his fears were set at rest, because, as dear old La Fontaine noticed even in his day, “the land is the last to fail you !”

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The artisan idle through habit and the peasant idle through suspicion constituted two ominous factors. But could it not almost be said that for some years past the whole nation had been sunk in sloth? The pleasure-seeking spirit characteristic of life under the Directory had been accompanied by a wave of laziness which had swept over the whole country. But this was really only superficially so, for if France seemed to be paralysed and sterilised by a species of general lassitude, it was because, in the chaos that prevailed, men's energies sought in vain for an outlet. Presently, a voice was heard crying: "*La carrière est ouverte aux talents!*" and, spurred on by this call, the enthusiasm of 1789 revived and placed itself at the disposal of useful labour; but during the first few months of 1800 all these people were still awaiting the field of fruitful enterprise where under the constructive leadership of the Consul they were to collaborate with him in the great national task which must be carried out as soon as everything was in working order again.

Chaos everywhere, discord everywhere, and weakness everywhere! What possible remedy was there for all these ills? Chaos called for the man who would restore order, discord for the peacemaker, weakness for the life-giver. But the man capable of doing all this required a will of iron and intelligence of a very superior order. He would be met with opposition on every side which he would have to overcome. And thus everything was reduced to the problem of authority.

But, in her heart of hearts, France had never asked for anything else, even, nay above all in 1789—organised, coherent authority, just and firm. But, after 1789, this ill-used nation had fallen into the hands of speechifiers. It was at this time that the great orgy of phrasemongering began, linked up with a surfeit of

The people  
sick of  
Phrases.

principles and followed by a surfeit of attitudinising. But, after six years of this system, the people began to perceive that they were being lured by words; in 1789 they had had the words Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and peace dinned into their ears; but they had seen Liberty torn from them by a crowd of tyrants, Equality shamelessly trampled under foot by a contemptible oligarchy, Fraternity ending in massacres, and the much vaunted advent of peace leading, as it always does, to war abroad. A

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natural but inevitably exaggerated swing of the pendulum made the people turn against all principles and hate those who had been responsible for their abuse. They were sick to death of tribunes and publicists, assemblies, Clubs and *comitias*, and since the smiling liberty of 1789 had degenerated into licence below and tyranny above, they shook themselves free of it as of a superannuated falsehood. France of the year VIII was filled with a bottomless disgust of all these things. "The day of illusions, of oratorical chimaeras is gone for ever," declared one of the old députés who had become a Prefect.

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But the difficulty was that although they wanted another system they had no intention of sacrificing what had been won since 1789.

**The People  
devoted to  
the Principles  
of the  
Revolution.**

"The French people," declared a certain counter-revolutionary in 1808, "are tired of the Revolution, but not of the principles which brought it about," while an even greater reactionary was of opinion that "possibly not a twentieth part of France had desired what had been done, and yet it would have been impossible to find a thousand Frenchmen ready to destroy it when once it had been accomplished."

Of the three goals at which the Revolution in its idealistic days had aimed—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity—the people still remained fanatically faithful to one—Equality. "The sweets of Equality are probably the only fruits of the Revolution which the masses still enjoy," wrote a Royalist agent soon afterwards. And this was because as I have endeavoured to prove, it was the only benefit which the "masses" in 1789 desired.<sup>1</sup>

**Their  
Worship of  
Equality.**

The destruction of privilege, equality before the law, equality of taxation, careers open to all alike, this was all they wanted, though they wanted it badly. And for a long time the country had regarded everything

low and base that had happened since 1789 as being justified by the temporary necessity of opposing every counter-revolutionary activity and every attempt to take away the Equality that had been won.

Moreover, two results of the Revolution still remained which,

<sup>1</sup>The Revolution, p. 23.

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though they had certainly not been foreseen in 1789, the masses would not have willingly sacrificed for anything in the world—the new frontiers and the new tenure of property.

To the first of these I shall return presently. Suffice it for the moment to point out that the great victories and conquests had now become irrevocably associated in the public mind with the great civil conflicts and could no longer be separated from them ; bonds of sentiment had been forged linking up the Revolution with the glory won under its colours. And, indeed, the soldiers were perhaps the most ardent devotees of the Revolution for which they had unhesitatingly risked life and limb.

Furthermore, they were most of them the sons and brothers of those peasants who were also, for their part, irrevocably bound to this same Revolution by a consideration, less lofty perhaps, but just as powerful—that of the vested interests it had created.

**Vested Interests.** “The mass of the people,” observed one writer in 1794, “cares as little for the Republic as for Royalty, and simply clings to the advantages, local and civil, which the Revolution has conferred upon it.” But for this very reason, ever since 1785, they had all been trembling in their shoes at seeing how precarious were the results obtained and the conquests made ; and one and all were therefore anxious to have them confirmed by a strong Government which, while declaring itself solidly on the side of the Revolution, would for ever guarantee certain of its principles and certain of the changes it had introduced. Having formed an estimate of the millions of people interested in the Revolution, Mallet du Pan as early as the year II further declared that these masses “would accept the law from the hands of any master who knew how to enslave them through the medium of their hopes and fears.” But it was only a new authority which, by declaring the Revolution at an end, could guarantee those results of it which would “enslave the millions who had an interest in it.” All of which led back to the same demand—a strong hand, and, therefore, a single hand.

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Even the Royalists, for the most part, looked to the advent of one man, while hoping to make of this Cæsar the Monk of the fleurs de lis.

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This unfortunate party was indeed reduced to makeshifts. The 19th Brumaire had robbed it of its last chance. "It was a lost cause," confessed d'Andigné, one of the last leaders of La Vendée. But, in the eyes of the world, it was "lost" long before Brumaire.

The Princes had gravely compromised themselves in the eyes of the nation by their intercourse with foreign countries. Even

**Unpopularity of the Bourbons.** Louis XVI's daughter, on the eve of her marriage with the Duc d'Angoulême, had on his release from the Temple warned her uncle, the Pretender—Louis XVIII to the Royalists—of this fact.

"There is a great change in public opinion, but foreigners are very rightly hated, and the people turn a blind eye to their Prince when they see him taking up arms against his subjects." And Cobenzl, the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, wrote to his Government: "We need not flatter ourselves that we can restore a Bourbon to the throne of France. Public opinion is too hostile to that House."

Thus, compromised by their alliance with the enemy, the Bourbons made themselves even more unpopular by their haughty and unbending attitude, which can be explained only as being the "malady of exile," as Tocqueville calls it, and had perhaps cost Louis XVIII the throne on the eve of Fructidor.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, many were of opinion that the "King" was utterly incapable of action. The Pretender was living at Mittau, clinging to his dignity in spite of the severest trials and refusing to abandon it. But this very dignity served on occasion as a mask for a species of "serene selfishness" which, either seen or felt by many, made him disliked even by a large number of Royalists.

The result was that in France people who were frankly Royalist in their sympathies either despaired of their cause or else—and this is an interesting fact which has never been pointed out—they were of opinion that it was necessary for the Bourbons to undergo a long period of trial in the hard school of suffering before it would be possible to restore them to the throne. The nation, at all events, remained hostile to them and, what was even worse, indifferent. For a new generation had already come into being who knew them not.

<sup>1</sup>*The French Revolution*, pp. 450-451.



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Nevertheless, directly after Brumaire, many Royalists, ever ready to cherish illusions, continued to repeat "Monk!" and by entertaining a hope which furthered his aims they all unwittingly worked in the cause of Cæsar. Others, less blinded by illusion, were anxious that before the Royal House was restored everything should have been put in order by a hand infinitely more gifted than theirs. "We want a man of iron," observed

Demand for  
a Man.

Champagny to d'Antraigues, "to smoothen out our difficulties, and many believe that Bonaparte is that man." A certain Royalist agent put the whole thing in a nutshell when he said that the outcry for a man was inspired by the desire that "the country should once again have a head."

Thus, whether he turned out to be a Washington or a Monk, a Cromwell or a Cæsar, the demand for one man was universal.

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This was more particularly the case for the purpose of making peace with the rest of Europe.

The war had dragged on for over seven years. Menaced on every frontier, and at one time actually invaded, France by a vigorous counter-attack had driven back the foe in 1792 and regained her "natural boundaries." They had been confirmed by solemn decrees—they were "constitutional boundaries."

The attacks of 1792 had indeed once more brought home to France that it was necessary for her frontiers to be extended and strengthened, and furthermore, the dangers which still threatened these frontiers convinced her that, like a village in a state of siege, she must protect her new battlements by means of advance posts. Under the Directory she had set these fears at rest by the creation of "marches"; Holland, Switzerland, and the Italian Republics, bound to her by close ties, were to form a protective barrier for the new France. And in due course Talleyrand was able with some justification to assure a certain English representative that "the aggrandisement of France was entirely due to repeated attempts to oppress her."

But Europe refused to accept these consequences of a war which she had herself originally let loose. The newly won power

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of France was, more particularly to England, a source of anxiety amounting to exasperation. Not content with laying hands on the Low Countries, the Directory had occupied Leghorn, Ancona and Tarentum, and after conquering Malta, had hurled its armies on Egypt and Syria. The result was that France had established in the Mediterranean a hegemony which made Great Britain shake in her shoes. The possession of Antwerp by France would

alone have been sufficient to do this. As Castle-

England. reagh wrote in 1813, the interests of his country demanded first and foremost the wresting of Antwerp from France. The English Government had been of this opinion ever since 1793, with the result that—as happened four times under the Empire—England was responsible for the formation of a new coalition which, after turning the French out of Italy, was, towards the end of 1799, actually engaged in menacing the new frontiers. The victories of Brune in Holland, and of Masséna in Switzerland, had merely resulted, as everybody was well aware, in postponing the general upheaval of Europe, which England had done everything in her power to provoke and had encouraged by means of subsidies.

True, Prussia had on this occasion remained outside the coalition. This vulture among the nations—"the political cancer of Germany," as she was afterwards

Prussia. described by a certain Swede—hoped, by maintaining an attitude of expectant neutrality, to be able to extort a heavy price, at the expense of the Austrian Empire, which was on the verge of collapse, for the support which she would eventually give to one or other of the disputants. It was only the defeats with which the Russians had recently met in Holland and Switzerland that had made her, for the time being, adhere to her neutrality—her "oscillating neutrality," as Albert Sorel very rightly described it.

These defeats, suffered so far from the banks of the Neva, had not disheartened the Tsar Paul. They had merely inspired in him

The Tsar feelings of violent irritation against his allies, Paul. whom he accused of having forsaken him. But although he retired into sulky inactivity, his

hatred of revolutionary France still found expression in outbursts of fury. Any decision, even the most extravagant, however, was

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possible in a man of his excitable temperament, whose natural confusion of mind had for long past been translated into the most unexpected orders and counter-orders. The war, in which almost the whole of Europe was engaged, was still a menace and might at any moment develop into a matter of life and death.

In spite of certain temporary advantages gained in Italy, it had been ruinous and had contributed in no small measure to the depletion of the Treasury. Moreover, although in those days ten campaigns took a smaller toll of life than one modern battle, those seven years of incessant warfare on three or four fronts at once had, nevertheless, in the end sorely depleted the French Army and plunged whole families into mourning. It only remained for conscription, introduced by the Convention, to take away sons and brothers from their homes and their fields, for the war to be regarded as an intolerable burden.

"The cry for peace is unanimous," declared Fouché soon after Brumaire. He was used to sounding public opinion carefully.

**The Desire for Peace.** In this instance he was supported from innumerable quarters. "So great is the desire for peace," wrote an eyewitness on the 16th Thermidor of the year VIII, "that the public is apparently ready to welcome it with open arms on any conditions."

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This particular eyewitness was, however, mistaken on this point. The mass of the people—and this is what complicated the problem—though they longed for peace, would have risen up in rebellion against a peace which demanded, as one of its conditions, the surrender of the conquests made by the Revolution and the denial of the glory that had been won. France, in spite of exaggerated protestations of humanitarian pacificism, had been driven into war in 1792 by the menacing attitude of the rest of Europe and the invasion of her territory, and with fiery zeal supported a war which she never ceased to regard as one of defence, even after she had regained her natural frontiers.

**But Peace must safeguard the Conquests.** The victories she had won had, moreover, exalted the national pride, and more particularly the sentiment which for almost eight hundred years had urged on the nation, under the leadership of its various Governments, towards the recovery of the old frontiers of

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ancient Gaul. Never at any time, even after a great defeat, would any member of the Assemblies have dared to suggest the abandonment of the Rhine and the Alps, for the simple reason that nobody in the whole country would for a single moment have tolerated such a step. More important still, the country had been involved by its leaders in dreams of glory which the victories they had won seemed to justify. Even the "marches," when once they had been created, appeared to be necessary. And Albert Sorel has proved conclusively that if Bonaparte himself had sacrificed Italy and Holland, he would have been repudiated.

All these feelings, born of a war of defence and inflamed by a war of conquest, had been fused into a single sentiment so resolute, that in spite of the country's weakness on the eve of Brumaire, it still survived in the hearts of all. True, they wanted peace, but certainly not "on any conditions." And if, in the year VIII, it was into the ears of Bonaparte that the cries of "Long live peace!" were shouted, it was because in the hour of victory he had once before secured peace with glory, and had confirmed the conquest of the frontiers and the acquisition of the marches; and now it was firmly believed that after the defeats that had been suffered he alone, if it were once more necessary, could win peace through victory.

And thus, once again, we find everything pointing to the idea of a man who "in order to control everything should hold everything in his hand."

"Only let a man of genius appear, and everything will be given its place," wrote a certain foreign diplomat in 1797. The man of genius had appeared; Bonaparte had sprung armed from the prayers of the nation!

SOURCES. Aulard : *Paris sous le Directoire*; *Paris sous le Consulat*, I; *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VI and VII. Fiévée: *Correspondance*, I; *Journaux divers*. Mercier : *Tableau de Paris*. Comtesse d'Albany, *Portefeuille*. Boulay de la Meurthe : *Le Duc d'Enghien* (documents), II. Peltier : *Paris pendant les années 1795-1802*. *Memoirs and Reminiscences* by Thibaudeau, d'Andigné, I. Madame de Chastenay, Mathieu Dumas, Mallet du Pan, Savary, Ségur and Roederer.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Vandal, Lanzac de Laborie, Sorel, Marion, Stourm, Picard, Aulard. Déjean, *Beugnot*. Driault, *Napoléon et l'Europe*, I. Pingaud, *De Bry*. Turquan, *Le Monde et le Demi-Monde*. Goncourt, *La Société sous le Directoire*. Lacroix (the bibliophile Jacob), *Directoire, Consulat, Empire*. Gautier, *Madame de Staël et Napoléon*. Ernest Daudet, *Histoire de l'Émigration*, III. Hauterive, *État de la France à la fin de l'an VIII*. Schmidt, *Paris sous la Révolution*. Pierre de la Gorce, *Histoire religieuse de la Révolution*, V.

## CHAPTER III

### BONAPARTE IN THE YEAR VIII

His looks "strike terror." His feelings repressed. His will; his passion for authority; his love of order and discipline. His intellect; his culture; his passion for work and knowledge; his thought; his imagination. The realist and the opportunist; his care for detail. How he used men. His "great propelling force." His ideas; the Revolution and the *Ancien Régime*. His desire to be "national." His horror of the rostrum and of the Press. The People. Bonaparte refuses any form of oligarchy. He desires peace; preventive war. He insists upon the natural frontiers. "It is enough to make the universe tremble."

**B**ONAPARTE was now thirty, but he had really lived twice that length of time, and, tried in the furnace of unique events, his personality, exceptionally strong by nature, had been miraculously matured and strengthened.

Ever since 1792, the aged Paoli, from his native Corsica, had been jealously watching his rise. "Just look at that little man!" he exclaimed. "He has in him the stuff of two Mariuses and a Sulla!" But he was neither a Marius nor a Sulla. He had in him nothing of the brutal soldier or of the bloodthirsty potentate. He towered above Cæsar himself, and had already far surpassed all who had gone before.

In 1799, his looks were staggeringly strange.

"He is a little man, with straight black hair, a sickly sallow complexion, expressive features, and a terrifying look," wrote, on the 10th of May, 1800, a certain Geneva pastor who saw him on his way to the St. Bernard; and everybody who at that time caught even a glimpse of him referred to his "devouring" gaze.

He was still extremely thin; his skin clung to his bones; the bridge of his aquiline nose was painfully sharp, he had a prominent chin, hollow cheeks, dark chestnut hair, which was always

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untidy, a neck which was already short and sunk between his heavy raised shoulders, his body, still thin, moved lightly in extremely tight clothes, his walk was jerky and somewhat "slouching," his movements sharp and quick. But all these details were not nearly so striking as his eyes, which were deep blue and were not "terrible" to everybody; for though generally piercing, they frequently softened more than the rest of his face and sometimes even smiled. But when he met with a rebuff his features contracted, and then his gaze, by all accounts, became quite insufferable. In 1801, Nodier wrote, "His looks strike terror."

He talked as though he were making an attack, looking straight at his interlocutor and never allowing him to get on one side of him. "With a foreign accent, disagreeable to the ear (the accent of his native Corsica)," writes d'Andigné, "he said what he had to say briefly and emphatically." His style, which was quite classic, preserved, even under the Consulate, a touch of revolutionary emphasis and, on rare occasions, was still filled with an astonishing lyric quality. The striking feature about both his conversation and his letters was the close connection between the expression and the idea; it was really his thought that spoke without any beating about the bush. In speaking, he always went straight to the point, and in a few minutes either convinced, seduced or crushed his listener. When he dictated a letter, the recipient of it might almost have been standing in front of him: "Anybody listening at the door," declared one of his secretaries, "would have thought that the two persons were in the room together."

"There are two separate men in me," he once observed to Roederer, "the man of brain and the man of heart. Don't imagine I have not a kind heart like other men."

**His Description of Himself.** I am even a good-natured sort of man. But, from my earliest youth I have done all I can to silence that cord in myself and now it is incapable of giving vent to a sound." He was, as a matter of fact, impressionable to the point of being extremely emotional. One of his enemies felt that "in his heart of hearts he concealed deep sensibilities." He did indeed conceal them as a rule, and, as he said himself, "did all he could to silence them."

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Nevertheless, these emotional reserves broke loose when he was in a rage. He was a Corsican with a violent temper which swept everything before it, and at such moments he was literally horrifying. "An infuriated tiger could not have been worse," wrote one witness, an unfriendly witness it is true, after a scene with Berthier. But, as a rule, his fury soon subsided. "As soon as my rage is over, it is all finished and done with," he wrote to Decrès, who had felt the rough side of his tongue and showed himself aggrieved. "I hope you won't nurse a grudge against me."

The fact was that in his case the brain nearly always retained the upper hand ; by the "brain," I mean the will quite as much as the intellect.

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"Bonaparte is the finest manifestation of the human will," wrote Schopenhauer, the philosopher of pessimism, after an interview with the hero. And, indeed, it is doubtful whether any man has ever given such proof of will in every shape and form. He is credited with having said, "'Impossible' is not a French word." At all events he seems to have eliminated it from his vocabulary. "The spectre of the humble and the refuge of the cowardly," he observed to Molé, "in the mouth of the powerful, believe me, this word is merely a confession of impotence." Never was he more sincere. From his earliest youth, he had always confronted the impossible with his own will.

This will, by means of which he held both mind and body in subjection, became, in matters of State, an inflexible spirit of authority. "Before the Revolution," he confided to Molé, "authority had lapsed to the female line ; we had an idiotic King ; he has been hanged and his family driven out." It is difficult to say how far he was haunted by the memory of Louis XVI, whom he had seen dragged by an insulting mob from the Tuileries to the Salle du Manège. He had long since learnt all the lessons the incident had to teach him. When one of his brothers, who had become a King, wrote telling him that all his subjects were praising his goodness, he replied very rudely : "My dear brother, when a King is called good, his

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reign is a failure." But, as a matter of fact, he was far too clever to love authority for its own sake ; for him it was merely the necessary prerequisite of order.

And he had order in his very bones. He had long since introduced it into his private life, as he afterwards did into the State over which he ruled. "His is an orderly mind," His Love of Order. observed Chaptal, one of his ministers. But for a few transitory love affairs, he was a man of strict morality, while in the expenditure of money he was even stricter. If before long we find him casting his eye over apparently the most trifling details—for no more than Richelieu would he admit that *De minimis non curat praetor*—it was because he could not tolerate a breach of order, however small, remaining unpunished. It was this love of order that was really responsible for his passion for organisation and codification ; he wanted every man to be employed in the position for which he was best fitted and to put everybody and everything into their proper places. This concern made him extremely severe. "There is nothing so tyrannical," he declared, "as a Government that tries to be paternal." He always believed that prevention was better than repression, and that the only effective method of prevention was to "make examples." "The great secret of an efficient police," he wrote to Fouché, "is to punish severely in order to avoid punishing often." But, with his usual intelligence, he admitted that while severity was indispensable for order, justice was also essential. Reward was all-important as was also punishment ; but for no consideration in the world would he remit a punishment any more than he would fail to bestow a reward.

\* \* \* \* \*

Such strength of will—"a man of bronze," as a certain foreign representative shortly afterwards described him—such energy, such regard for authority and order would, even wielded by a mediocre brain, have been of benefit to the nation, and, in the position in which France then found herself, would indeed have been a great blessing ; but for such gifts to be used and illumined by a brain of such outstanding endowments, co-ordination and power, constituted a boon of surpassing value.

Similar strength of will had possibly existed before, but that it



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should be supported by such a colossal weight of intellect was, I believe, a phenomenon hitherto unknown.

Endowed by birth in a superlative degree with all the gifts which are supposed to emanate from the brain—imagination, memory, clarity of vision, swift judgment, intellectual curiosity, capacity for work, and an elasticity of thought capable of infinite extension both in depth and in breadth—he had, furthermore,

**His  
Intellect.**

constantly nourished this stupendous brain by a devouring passion for reading. Even among those

whose studies had never been interrupted by the call to action few had read more than he had done. His particular type of brain would seem to have been eminently fitted for the study of the exact sciences, and in a letter he wrote to Laplace, at a time when the Empire was at the height of its glory, he confessed to a certain feeling of sadness in this connection, declaring that he was "sorry that force of circumstances, which had driven him into a different career, had led him so far from that of the scientist." And he was perfectly sincere. We know that as soon as he had passed his examinations, history took the precedence. He devoured a whole library of history, searching, if the truth were known, first and foremost for reasons for self-enlightenment and self-justification. What had he not read, indeed? But he made notes on all he read and remembered everything, for his extraordinary memory retained the substance of his reading as though it had been engraved on tablets of bronze.

Moreover, he loved work; he had a passion for it. Man of

**His Brain  
ever Active.**

action though he was, such was the miraculous quality of his brain, that he was even more a man of intellectual activity.

"I work very hard, and I meditate a great deal," he informed Roederer one day. "If I seem to be always prepared for everything, ready to face everything, it is because before undertaking anything I have always meditated for a long time and foreseen what was likely to happen. I haven't got a *djinn* at my elbow secretly prompting me on the spur of the moment and telling me what to say and do in circumstances which nobody has foreseen; it is meditation that teaches me. I am always working; I work when I am dining, I work at the theatre; in the middle of the night I wake up and work."

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This was perfectly true. His brain was constantly at work on the past, the present and the future. It was work that was almost painful. "When I am meditating," he confessed, "I am in a state of extremely painful agitation. . . . I am like a woman in labour." A certain stranger, who saw him at close quarters, bore witness to this: "I know no man who is surer of himself when once he has made up his mind, but I also know of no man who, before doing so, holds longer consultation with himself."

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"He holds consultation with himself"; but he held consultation with others perhaps even more. Never did a man extract so much information from every quarter. "What is it?

How much? How? Why?" these four expressions recur probably more often than any other in his correspondence. His intellect was too alert not to recognise his own limitations and the

gaps in his knowledge, and when he seized the reins of power in Brumaire he was well aware that he was ignorant of much; but eager to know all in order to do all, he had already entered upon his formidable researches. When he was unable to keep under his own eye the man whom he was literally emptying of all it was possible to extract from him, he insisted upon being given State papers, historical summaries, statistics, returns and statements; if the returns he was studying were not quite up to date he would write complaining that they were very old and ask for something more recent to be sent him.

He asked questions, he listened and he read with such profound attention that, with the help of his unrivalled memory everything, as I have already observed, was engraved on his brain as it were on tablets of bronze. But all these things merely provided him with food for reflection. Whereupon he proceeded to elaborate his plans, and then he was always at his best. Day and night he would be working out his ideas, taking his sleep, as Thibaudeau could bear witness, "when it suited him." As a matter of fact, more especially during the first few years of his rule, everything in his house was arranged "to suit his convenience."

Thus he was prepared for all contingencies. "Luck is not responsible for anything," he observed to Fouché. He would deal

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with three or four alternatives at the same time and endeavour to conjure up every possible eventuality—preferably the worst. This foresight, the fruit of meditation, generally enabled him to be ready for any rebuff; nothing ever took him by surprise. He kept his eyes on the board and long before a piece had to be moved he had marked its place.

**Did not  
believe in  
Luck.**

His vision, as I have said, was capable of both breadth and depth. And perhaps the most astonishing characteristic of his intellect was the combination of idealism and realism which enabled him to face the most exalted visions at the same time as the most insignificant realities.

**Both a  
Realist and an  
Idealist.**

And, indeed, he was in a sense a visionary, a dreamer of dreams, nay, one would almost be tempted to say that he pursued fantasies, were it not that his dreams—and even his fantasies—were nearly always realised.

It was impossible for him to take a narrow view. In him imagination, the leaven of all genius, had reached the highest possible degree of development. His views bore witness to this; they were never limited to one or even several objects. So much for his breadth of vision. And now for its depth! None of his dreams, however fantastic they might appear, was really pure fantasy; in the first place because he stood firmly embedded in realities which he had carefully studied, and secondly because his dreams were immediately translated into facts by concrete action and practical measures.

He was indeed extraordinarily realistic. His mind, itself apparently immeasurable, measured both men and things. We shall never know more than a fragment of his dreams, but he was constantly rejecting those which, on reflection, he found held out no hope of being more or less swiftly realised; and if he did not reject them he postponed them. In any case he knew how to modify them to suit the necessities of the moment. In this sense he was a great opportunist, entirely opposed to any idea of abiding by a hidebound system. "High politics," he remarked more than once, "are nothing but common sense applied to great matters."

This definition was fully justified in the early days of the

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Consulate, when the task with which he was faced was precisely that of making good the harm done by the frenzied ideology of the Assemblies and discovering, as opposed to it, methods dictated by common sense—realism in its most agreeable form.

The second characteristic of this realism lies in the fact that a man like Bonaparte adapts himself to circumstances. True, there were instances in which he thought fit to "force the issue," but, more often than not, in politics as well as in strategy, he bowed to circumstances. "I am sometimes a fox and sometimes a lion," he confessed, making use of a metaphor worthy of Louis XI. "The whole secret of government lies in knowing when to be the one or the other."

But this realism shines out even more brilliantly in his concern about details of execution than in his anxiety to seize every opportunity. This is characteristic of all great organisers. Cardinal de Retz accused Richelieu of "being too much concerned about trifles"; but, on the contrary, it is a sign of genius to be able to combine with more grandiose designs that "concern about trifles" on which the success of the former so often depends. And, indeed, ever since the Italian campaign, Bonaparte had trained his eye to see everything—to penetrate to the depths. In this connection, his correspondence is well-nigh staggering. That the same man who had just conceived some colossal plan of campaign in the field of diplomacy or of war, some great scheme of political reconstruction, or of world-wide upheaval, should, in a flash, be able to concentrate his mind on calculating the number of mules necessary for moving an army across the Alps or the number of cartridges required for a particular division, was indeed a miracle. But in his case thousands of such instances could be given.

The way he employed individual men belongs to the same category. Comines says somewhere of Louis XI, that of all the princes of his day he "worked hardest to win over to himself those who had the power to serve him."

**How he  
used Men.**

The same can be said of Bonaparte. In his invincible desire, from the very first days of the Consulate, to call to his side every Frenchman, regardless of party or birth, he was animated, I confess, to some extent by the determination to reunite at a time when everything was divided; but there was also

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the longing to make full use of every gift, every activity, every experience. He engaged in this "man-hunt" with an almost passionate ardour, and he nearly always succeeded, knowing in every case how to use the arguments best calculated to attract and to bind. But if, once in a blue moon, experience showed him to have been mistaken, if, for instance, he found that some man whom he had summoned to the Council of State "would soon mean nothing more to him than a seat," he immediately got rid of one so incompetent. "The worst form of immorality," he once went so far as to write, "is to engage in a calling of which one is not a master." So irresistible was his love of capacity that it occasionally developed into a source of weakness; for he always found it extremely difficult to part from an unreliable man whom he knew to be capable. If, for grave reasons, he dismissed an unfaithful but brilliant colleague, he could not refrain—sometimes extremely rashly—from recalling him to his council-board. This happened in the case of Talleyrand and of Fouché. The fact of the matter was that to allow a gift to remain unused made him suffer; he regarded it as merely another form of "immorality."

When he had laid hold of a man he, so to speak, extracted the last ounce from him, and kept his nose to the grindstone. But nobody knew better than he did how to stimulate industry and he urged his men on until they begged for mercy. If, when the night was far advanced, and the Council of State had been working at terrific pressure for hours, he saw some of its members dozing, the young Consul, who was never sleepy, would pass along behind the slumberers and give them a rude awakening. "Now then, Citizens," he would exclaim, "we must earn the money France is paying us!" He kept them up late, but that did not prevent him from routing them out of their beds very early the next day for fresh deliberations. "We had to get there terribly early," sighed Cambacérès long afterwards. Poor Cambacérès was naturally indolent!

His methods wore men out and sometimes killed them. "Never to let men grow old," he wrote as early as the year IV to Carnot, "should be the great art of government." Moreover, life was worth living to the full, and then what did death matter! "In every career glory comes only at the end!"

Hard, cruel, barbaric!—so men called him. And he did indeed, to use a harsh expression, run his men to death; but he

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did so in the public cause. We shall have occasion to describe the unrivalled achievements of his government, which were due to the fact that, under the leadership of great public servants, who were themselves unremitting in their labours, the various administrative bodies, the General Staffs, the offices, and all the civil and military functionaries, put their backs into their work, and had their heart and soul in it. And the main reason for all this was that at the head of that same Government was a man of iron, whose untiring hand guided the machine of State which he himself had restored to working order. With a will and a brain, that never for a single moment flagged, the First Consul considered himself in 1800 superior to his day, but he was far too clear-sighted to imagine himself all-sufficient. "A man is only a man," he observed of himself. To the varied gifts with which Nature had so lavishly endowed him at birth, the fairies who sat round his cradle in Ajaccio added one last and most precious endowment—the rare capacity for reading men at a glance and deciding how they should be employed.

It was, indeed, a miracle that at a moment when France was seeking to raise her from the ruins she found a man in whom all the qualities of a leader should be combined, one who in the almost inconceivable richness of his gifts, far surpassed the wildest dreams of ambition.

Moreover, since his character responded to the demands of an extraordinary state of affairs, it also came about that his ideas responded to those born of the country's aspirations.

\* \* \* \* \*

And what were these ideas?

They were derived from what he found in his own heart, and from his study of history and of the spectacle which, for the last ten years, had been unfolded before his own eyes.

When he was quite young he had welcomed the Revolution, and for some time it even seemed as though he would go to extreme lengths of "Jacobinism." How far was he sincere in adopting such an attitude? In talking to d'Andigné he used the expression, "We nobles . . ." It is by no means certain that

A Revolutionary in his Youth.

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he approved of all the destruction that took place between 1789 and 1792; in fact, the only accusation he had to bring against the last of the Bourbons was their utter incompetence, "the imbecility" of Louis XVI, and, later on, the latter's weakness in dealing with the Assemblies and with the mob. But he was very far from including the *Ancien Régime* in his denunciations. In the first days of the Consulate

His Ad-  
miration of  
the "Ancien  
Régime."

he even had the audacity, in the presence of some merchants, to refer to the old administration as "the best that had ever existed." And at this

period he also astonished a certain foreign representative by his "extremely rational defence of the organisation of the old monarchy," declaring that the cause of its overthrow lay not in the shortcomings of the Government, but in those of the governors. Moreover, he told Mollien that "while he wished to preserve all the useful innovations which the Revolution had succeeded in introducing he had no intention of giving up the good institutions which it had been foolish enough to destroy."

He was of opinion—quite rightly—that the upheaval of 1789 had been merely a struggle "for equality." "Liberty," he added, "was only the pretext." Before the Council of State, in which so many old members of the Constituent Assembly had seats, he passed severe condemnation on the Assembly of 1789 which "had violated justice," and "in attacking the sovereign had attacked all property." He had a horror of the period between 1789 and 1792, which, he declared, owing to the very existence of the Assembly, was one of complete anarchy. "The Convention was less to blame; it had been merely consistent. And moreover it had saved the country!"

The last few words reveal his real feelings. He loved the Revolution "in its military and warlike aspect, as victorious and Roman," to use Albert Vandal's apt description. The conquest of the natural frontiers, the apotheosis of French glory, and the preparation for French hegemony were, undoubtedly, together with "*la carrière ouverte aux talents*," what he most admired in the achievements of the Revolution.

Truth to tell, the Revolution was, in his eyes, a fact. If in destroying the throne of centuries, France had also destroyed the

## BONAPARTE IN THE YEAR VIII

whole of the *Ancien Régime*, it was because the Revolution partook of the nature of destiny. In any case France remained irrevocably devoted to it. "She is ready to put up with ten Committees of Public Safety," he declared, "and yet she would not put up with the Bourbons for three months." He had no intention of wiping out the principles, the institutions and the conquests of the Revolution; his only aim was to suppress parasitical elements.

✓ He agreed that the French Revolution was an egalitarian revolution; equality appealed to him. He agreed that the Revolution, by its re-partition of land, had prepared the way for the system of which Colbert had dreamed two hundred years previously, the establishment of that centralised State which the French Kings had never entirely succeeded in realising and which, now that the ground had been cleared, was to be raised by his hands. He agreed that the Revolution had made the conquest of the natural frontiers popular and had sanctified their retention. All this was enough, with the support of the old revolutionary ardour of his early days, to make him, on mature reflection, regard the Revolution as a boon. To be considered "the incarnation of the Revolution," as Metternich called him, was by no means displeasing to him, and he put what he felt into words when he declared that he "respected the results of a Revolution which he wished to end but not to disavow."

It was all these ideas that gave rise to the policy which in any case he regarded as obvious—the reconciliation of past and present, implying the fusion of parties, or rather their extinction.

**His Conciliatory Policy.**

"To govern in the interests of a party," he declared just after Brumaire, "is sooner or later to become dependent on it. They will never get me to do it. *I am national.*"

He was indeed "national." He loved France. He loved her present, but he also loved her past, and unreservedly identified himself with it. "From Clovis to the Committee

**His Desire to be**

**"National."**

of Public Safety, I belong heart and soul to it all."

These words written in 1809 he would have been quite ready to pronounce in 1800. He "belonged heart and soul to all" that had happened in the past, and in the present he intended to be a *national leader*.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

He was, as I have already observed, temperamentally a man of authority. For him the word "power" required no qualification. He would never have said "a strong power"; power should always be strong. And to be strong it had to be concentrated in the hands of a single individual, free of all fetters and responsible.

His  
Hatred of  
Assemblies.

This explains his detestation of Assemblies, a detestation which he openly expressed as early as the Directory, when he obviously aimed at the suppression of the incoherent Councils and the establishment of another form of legislature "which will not deluge us with a thousand and one petty laws all of which cancel each other out by their absurdity and produce a nation without laws, but possessed of three hundred folios of laws." This

His Fear of  
the Press.

also explains his fear of the Press. "You expect me to forbid speeches which can be heard by a hundred to five hundred persons," he remarked

soon after this, "and yet to allow it to be heard by several millions."

A Government free of undue control, and meeting with no serious obstacle in the Assemblies, which were to be preserved, though strictly limited to passing the Bills presented by the supreme power—this was the first pre-requisite of authority. "I myself am the great tribune!" exclaimed the Emperor. And in 1800 the Consul was already aspiring to become "the great tribune."

If, moreover, he reduced the activities of the comitias to a mere shadow, this did not mean that he had any intention of ruling without the people. On the contrary, his object was to rely on Democracy against the various oligarchies.

He both feared and loved the people, and the popularity which, from the very beginning, he enjoyed among humble folk, workmen, peasants and soldiers, encouraged him to place his confidence in them.

His Love  
of the  
People.

He wished the people of Paris, as soon as their daily bread was secured—I shall return to this later—to have amusements that would uplift their minds. He was delighted when before long an opportunity arose of decorating the breast of a worthy miner with the Legion of Honour, which he refused to bestow on mere wealth; and everything he did gave the im-

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pression that he would give his feelings free rein when he visited the workshops and factories and chatted familiarly with the artisans and piece-workers. He was also delighted that his power had been thrice based on the "will of the people"—the

**His Hatred of Oligarchies.** plebiscite. The advantage of the plebiscite was that it enabled him to escape the dangerous influence of the oligarchies more easily.

Of all these oligarchies the one he hated most was the financial caucus which was supreme under the Directory. "Wealth to-day is the fruit of robbery and plunder," he declared, and he foamed at the mouth at the thought of these "robbers" headed by parvenu speculators like the Ouvrards, the Hainguerlots, the Seguins and a dozen others. "That would be the worst possible aristocracy!" he maintained.

He refused to tolerate the rule of the rich; but stranger still, he also refused to tolerate the rule of the soldier, "military rule." He loved the soldier, but he would have been horrified at the idea of Generals attempting to lay down the law. "Courage in war," he observed to Roederer, "is not enough to give a man the right to rule." And again, "It is characteristic of soldiers that they wish to rule despotically." In later days he was proud of the fact that in an "entirely military Empire" he had succeeded in keeping soldiers out of the conduct of affairs.

No plutocracy! No military oligarchy! But he also refused to tolerate "the domination of the priests," and set his face quite as resolutely against the rule of "the lawyers." In short, from 1800 onwards, he was determined to protect the Government against any influence that might hamper its freedom of action. A master, a leader, an arbitrary sovereign, a restorer and lastly one who would preserve order against all possible mistakes on the part of the rostrum, the press and the *comitias*, and be under no obligation to any of the social groups—such was undoubtedly the idea which the First Consul had in mind when, by the plebiscite of the year VIII, he was definitely made head of the new State. Thus only could Authority be assured.

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And, like the country at large, he had, in 1800, one last reason for desiring the establishment of this authority, which was so

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

vital for the reorganisation of the State and the restoration of order—namely, the necessity of defending France against the coalition of Europe and of securing peace with glory.

He wanted peace. "Let us give rest and tranquillity to the present generation," he said. "And then if future generations are so mad as to go to war, a few years of fighting will teach them to be wise and live in peace." There is nothing to show that these sagacious words which, as Consul, he shortly afterwards addressed to the Emperor of Austria, were not uttered in all sincerity.

This is not the place to discuss whether Napoleon, as has been maintained, desired peace throughout his career. But this much at least is certain, that in 1800 he desired it whole-heartedly, that in 1802 he greeted its conclusion with what might almost be called alacrity, and that in 1802 and 1803, as I will presently show, he made great efforts to preserve it.

The formidable task awaiting him at home, and in which he came to take a more passionate interest than in any military campaign, demanded all his attention and necessitated his presence. Peace alone would allow of his carrying through the enterprise with rapidity and vigour. When, in 1802, he publicly proclaimed the conclusion of a general peace, he conveyed the impression that France, now partially restored, was on the point of consecrating to fruitful labours the energy which she had known so well how to devote to the prosecution of a victorious war, and an unmistakable note of emotion underlay his words. He went even further and told Fox that "those who wished to rekindle the fire of war between Europeans who were members of the same family really wished for civil war."

But the day came when, attacked by Austria, Russia and Prussia in turn, he declared, "I can never have a real alliance with any of the Great Powers." And then he made it his object by the delivery of crushing blows to reduce to impotence those whom he would fain have seen living in peace and amity with him. There were occasions when he seemed to take the offensive, but in this connection he explained his position quite clearly to Talleyrand. "I do not wish for war," he said, "but I prefer to make it too early rather than too late."

Moreover, he regarded as aggression any menace to the frontiers

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won by the Revolution. The possession of the Rhine was "the fundamental principle," not to mention that of Belgium, of which, he repeated again and again, he would not relinquish an inch, "even if the enemy had his headquarters in the Faubourg St. Antoine." But he was well aware that Europe accepted this most unwillingly, nay, did not accept it at all; in fact, he added that ever since the time of Henri IV France had been an object of jealousy on the part of Europe because "the policy of all the Powers lies hid in their geography."

True, in 1800 he desired peace, if possible immediate peace, but it was to be a lasting peace which would allow the country, as soon as it felt the benefits of stability restored, to triumph in the economic struggle, a glorious peace which would consecrate, once and for all, the conquests won by France to the strains of the *Marseillaise* and the undying glory harvested on many a blood-stained field of battle.

We know that, eager though she might be for peace, France did not think very differently, and that while she placed herself unreservedly in the hands of a great master of war, it was because she hoped that by his victories he would secure that glorious and lasting peace for which he himself was longing.

But she also agreed with him that the first pre-requisite of this victory was the establishment of a strong Government over a nation reconstructed and at one with itself, and consequently the creation of an authority which commanded obedience. This, as we know, was the main principle of the great enterprise conceived by the First Consul. And thus not only his gifts but also his ideas tallied with the wishes of the nation. But a few months later a certain Royalist agent, after describing the miraculous spectacle of Bonaparte's physical and moral achievements, ended up with the words, "When a man of such strength of character finds himself at the head of the most vital and energetic of nations and has at his disposal infinite resources and an army that has conquered Europe, it is enough to make the Universe tremble!"

SOURCES. *Correspondance de Napoléon, passim*, particularly, I, II, III. Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon*, Vol. I. Debrotonne, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon*. Marquiset, *Napoléon sténographié au Conseil d'Etat*. Pelet, *Opinions de Napoléon*.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY

The proclamation of the 24th Frimaire. The Consuls; Cambacérès and Lebrun. The Ministers: Lucien Bonaparte, Talleyrand, Fouché. Reconstructive measures. The policy of tranquillisation. The Council of State. The Assemblies. The Opposition, Benjamin Constant and Germaine de Staël. The Duveyrier incident. Public opinion hostile to the opponents of the Government. Reduction in the number of newspapers. Formation of the administration. The Ministry of the Interior. The law of the 27th Ventôse. The monumental achievement of the year VIII. The first Prefects.

**C**ITIZENS, the Revolution is true to the principles from which it sprang; it is now at an end!" This was the vital sentence in the proclamation which, on the 24th Frimaire (15th of December, 1799) the Consuls had addressed to France when they promulgated the Constitution. It buried the past and inaugurated the future. On the 4th Nivôse (the 25th of December) another proclamation, announcing the formation of the new Government, confirmed the spirit of the first. The hand of Bonaparte may be seen in the programme which was couched in brief lapidary style: "To make the Republic dear to the citizens, respected by the foreigner, and feared by the enemy."

Of the three members of the triumvirate set up on the previous day, it was really Bonaparte alone who spoke, he alone who wrote and acted. The two other Consuls were merely distinguished ciphers, and, as a matter of fact, it was the only part allotted to them by the Constitution.

Furthermore, it was the General himself who had secured their appointment, and he had chosen men admirably fitted for the task devolving upon them; they were sufficiently capable to support him, sufficiently modest not to embarrass him.

Cambacérès and Lebrun were both lawyers, but whilst the

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former, who had practised in the provinces, had been a member of the Convention, the latter, at one time secretary of the Consuls. to the Chancellor Maupeou, had legislated in the Constituent Assembly. The former had specialised in equity, the latter in finance, and as they represented two different branches of knowledge, so too did they represent two different sets of people ; Lebrun stood for the Right and Cambacérès for the Left, but they were moderate representatives of their respective schools of thought. In fact they were both men of temperate outlook who, throughout the great upheaval, had remained prudent and rational middle-class citizens. Their virtue knew not heroism nor their hearts the fierce fire of enthusiasm.

Lebrun, though he seemed a Puritan, was a man of parts to whose pen light verse came as readily as voluminous statements;

Lebrun. he was regarded by the out-and-out devotees of the Revolution as a "bad patriot," which meant that he had never been very much enamoured of the Republic. But when Bonaparte was confronted with this allegation he merely replied, "All I ask for is a man of parts." It was precisely because he was a "man of parts" that Lebrun was content never to indulge in undue pretensions.

Cambacérès, a distinguished lawyer, was a worthy but characterless individual. Calm and solemn, and a great stickler for etiquette, he made himself slightly ridiculous in the eyes of Cambacérès. his contemporaries by his greed which was almost proverbial and his love of pomp and ceremony. But his unrivalled knowledge of law and a certain capacity he had for giving even the most violent measure the appearance of opportuneness, moderation and even justice, rendered him invaluable.

"One will protect my right, and the other my left," declared Bonaparte. Solid and convenient, they were, as a certain wit remarked, "the two arms of an easy chair," arms which would act as a support without getting in the way.

The Ministers, chosen from among the most capable men in the country either to take or to retain office, also had the peculiar merit of representing the most divergent shades of opinion in a Government which still inclined to the "Left."

Poor Laplace, the astronomer, who with his head in the clouds

## RECONSTRUCTION OF COUNTRY

was always on the point of falling into a ditch, had been replaced by Lucien Bonaparte, the First Consul's brother. Berthier was shortly to be succeeded by Carnot, whose name acted like a charm, while Gaudin and Decrès were destined to remain in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Marine respectively until the fall of the Empire.

Lucien was a remarkable politician, almost madly ambitious and almost indecently rapacious, but he was an extremely hard

**Lucien Bonaparte.** worker and the most intelligent of his family—except, of course, for Napoleon, who had no equal; he was a somewhat restless creature, but although

barely twenty-eight, he knew a great deal about the various political parties. In 1793 and 1794 he had played the Brutus, but for the time being he was inclined to be reactionary. He was certainly a valuable asset; but the two most conspicuous Ministers were undoubtedly Talleyrand, who was again entrusted with the conduct of Foreign Affairs, and Fouché, who was definitely retained as head of the Police. So striking were the characteristics of these two men and so great was the part they were destined to play, that we must devote a little more space to them. After Bonaparte, they were the most remarkable figures of the reign.

Talleyrand, the erstwhile aristocrat—and of what ancient lineage!—the erstwhile priest and even bishop, had, as we know, betrayed both the Orders to which he belonged.

**Talleyrand.** During the Terror he retired into oblivion, but returned to life again under the Directory, when he became Minister through the influence of Barras. "Led astray rather than unclassed," still an aristocrat to the marrow, a *grand seigneur* temporarily *encanaillé*, he had succeeded, throughout the strangest metamorphoses, in preserving the careless elegance and the serene impertinence of the Court of Versailles, and in spite of the most outrageous behaviour had kept, or easily renewed, his old connections. Supremely intelligent and sensitive, he had been brought up on the political doctrines handed on to him by the Choiseuls and the Vergennes of the *Ancien Régime*. This did not fail to produce an impression, even upon Bonaparte himself; he was an invaluable Minister with whom to confront the Europe whose language he understood so well.

Fouché, on the other hand, represented the most sinister



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

recollections of the Terror. He had been a member of the Mountain and one of the leading "regicides." He had, **Fouché.**

as we know, made use of the guillotine for forcing the "Revolution in its entirety," together with atheism and communism, on the central provinces, and had presided over the tragic massacres of Lyons. Although, as Minister during the declining days of the Directory, he had had recourse to repressive measures against over-zealous "brethren and friends," he made a show of being almost jealously faithful to the memory of the Revolution, and as a result was looked upon as the protector of the parties of the Left. The retention of such a man in office was in itself a 'dénial' of all the rumours of reaction. A good-natured man at heart, who had never indulged in terrorism except from fear of not appearing sufficiently advanced, and all the more odious, perhaps, because he was entirely devoid of principle, he was for this very reason easily able to make opportune retreats and follow any course dictated by necessity. Clever and daring, firm and perspicacious, he had in the essentially political department confided to his care, not only an extraordinary genius for police work, but also the capacity for making the Government respected without having recourse to severity; he was opposed to over-hasty reaction, but in favour of any useful attempt at reconciliation.

But this was the spirit of the whole Consulate—reparation and reconstruction, but no counter-revolution.

**Recon-  
structive  
Measures.**

And indeed, from the very beginning, the new Consuls took various measures calculated to put an end to dissensions, of which those reputed to be members of the "Right" were in reality the only victims; but they never went beyond what the First Consul desired for the time being.

Formed on the 6th Nivôse, and still sitting in the Luxembourg, the new Government inaugurated its tenure of office by issuing five decrees which were destined to produce the profoundest impression.

The first proclaimed that thenceforward the citizens were to have full use of sacred edifices consecrated before the 22nd of September, 1793, that all such edifices might be thrown open to the faithful for worship except on the decadi, and that priests would be allowed to carry

**Delight of  
the Catholics.**

## RECONSTRUCTION OF COUNTRY

on their ministry in France on the sole condition of taking an oath of loyalty to the Constitution. Furthermore, the Consuls decreed, in terms of the utmost deference, that the last honours should be paid to the remains of Pope Pius VI, who, by order of the Directory, had been dragged from Rome to France, and had just died there. The Catholics showed themselves to be more deeply moved by the re-opening of their sanctuaries than by this unexpected act of homage, and on the 13th Nivôse it was announced that there was a large increase in the numbers crowding to the doors of the churches, "where people kissed each other and wept for joy."

Meanwhile other decrees had been promulgated which, although they were not of such vital interest to the masses, did not fail to provoke deep emotion. One of them restored the right to exercise civic rights to the relatives of *émigrés* and to *ci-devant* nobles, thus restoring to the community those whom outrageous enactments had reduced to the level of outcasts. And while the list of *émigrés* was declared closed, it was decided to recall to their native land thirty-eight who had been proscribed in Fructidor, among them men like Carnot and Portalis, who were very shortly raised to the highest offices. As a matter of fact the same decree authorised the return to France of Barère and Vadier, two old terrorists who had been banished after Thermidor. Before long permission to return was also given to famous representatives of the ideas of 1789, the old Liberals of the Constituent Assembly; and above all to their most illustrious member, La Fayette; and there was every ground for hoping that a similar eclecticism would disarm any opposition to which the first decrees might give rise.

It was the same spirit that dictated the abolition of festivals calculated to recall unhappy memories of the civil war. The 31st of May, the anniversary of the proscription of the Girondins, and the 9th Thermidor, that of the fall of the Robespierrists, were both done away with. The only anniversaries that continued to be celebrated were those about which "everybody was unanimous"—the 14th of July, the day of Liberty, and the 1st Vendémiaire (21st of September) when the Republic was proclaimed. This step was profoundly symbolic. The abolition of the "festival of the King's

Certain  
Festivals  
Abolished.

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death" pleased not only the Royalists, but also everybody of taste and sensibility.

Those who benefited by these conciliatory measures could hardly believe their senses, a fact which bears eloquent testimony to the state of subjection to which the nation had been reduced on the eve of Brumaire. For a Government not to celebrate its victory by proscribing its enemies was marvellous enough, but that it should actually "deproscribe," to use an apt expression coined by Albert Vandal, seemed far too good to be true.

The acts of religious pacification more especially made the Catholics wild with enthusiasm, and they flocked to the churches; but they cast a deep gloom over the "philosophers." The *Journal des Hommes Libres*, the organ of the old Jacobins which had fallen into Fouché's hands, endeavoured at once to reassure and satisfy these perturbed gentlemen. "Even if we were to see the Capuchins return, with or without cassock and cowl, we should take it quite calmly, if only the Republicans are wise and will consent patiently to await the result of this religious thaw." But the mass of the nation, irrespective of class, hailed these remedial measures with enthusiasm, their fears of reaction being set at rest by the declarations made by some of the Ministers. Nevertheless the attitude assumed by some of the groups warned the Consul of the difficulties with which he would be confronted in the arduous task of "reconciliation." What would be the result of the "series of Edicts of Nantes" which he was at this time contemplating, if these simple "half-measures" gave rise to such agitation and even hatred in the very circles from which the Government officials were drawn?

True, according to the Constitution, he was master of the country, but until the new order was established, this was so in theory only. As long as a reorganised administration did not allow him to make his policy prevail in all parts of the country, he could never feel really certain that it would eventually triumph over the passions opposed to it. It was imperative for the State, as arranged for by the Constitution of the year VIII, to consolidate itself, and for everything to be working in harmony with the new régime before three months had elapsed.

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The first piece of mechanism to be created had been the Council of State. The Council of State had been entrusted by the Constitution with the duty of drafting Bills, the initiative for which remained in the hands of the Government, before they were presented to the Tribunate to debate and the Legislative Body to vote. For Bonaparte knew that in view of the opposition with which he was bound to meet on the part of the Legislative Assemblies, at all events at first, it was important to place before them only such Bills as had been well thought out beforehand and had been duly hall-marked by the competence of those who had played a part in drafting them. Moreover, he was, as I have already remarked, far too clever not to know his own limitations and ever ready to suck other men's brains, with the result that his first thought was to summon to the Council of State, which was destined to be invaluable to him, men whose worth, regardless of what their opinions might be, seemed in his eyes to be beyond dispute and their abilities a most precious asset. His iron hand kept their heads bowed for days and often nights over the formidable *dossier* presented by the task of reconstruction, and in carrying out their duty they acquired every day a more profound knowledge of the country. Thus the Assembly became the laboratory of real *Politics*, which in its proper signification means simply *the art of ruling the City*. In it Bonaparte formed not only a group of eminent legists, but he also created a nursery for administrators.

"In his Council of State Napoleon gathered together the fifty least stupid men in France," said Stendhal, that same Henri Beyle who had for a short time been a member of it in the capacity of "*auditeur*." Let us rather say that during the winter of 1800 Bonaparte sought out the fifty men whom he regarded as being best endowed with brains, experience and zeal for the service of the State. Apart from a few experts like the *ci-devant* Comte de Fleurieu, ex-Minister of Marine under Louis XVI, General Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, a student as well as a valiant soldier, Fourcroy and Chaptal, both of them distinguished and well-informed scholars, and Portalis, Bigot de Préameneu, Régnier and Maleville, leading lights of the Bar, he had deliberately summoned to the Council all the best brains bequeathed to him by the Revolution. Boulay de la Meurthe, Merlin de Douai, François de Nantes,

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Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, Pelet de la Lozère, Defermon, Roederer, Treilhard, Thibaudeau, Tronchet, Réal and a score of others had more or less left their mark on the annals of the Revolution. Many of them had held forth from the rostrum, sometimes extravagantly. But Bonaparte knew the solid worth of lava that has cooled down, and the miracle he had foreseen actually occurred. As soon as they left the rostrum and took their seats round the green board, they became different men, and the heated ideologues of yore were found to have developed into cold and painstaking artisans of the State.

But, in making his choice, he had taken the cream of the personnel of the Revolution whom Sieyès, as we know, had intended for filling the Senate, the Tribunate and the Legislative Body. It was, in fact, Sieyès who had stocked the three Assemblies with old revolutionaries; out of a total of 480, 330 had been members of the Directory Councils, while 57 had sat in almost all the revolutionary Assemblies. And thus the same personnel was once more perpetuated, which, as we know, various ill-advised decrees of the Convention had, much to the disapproval of all, perpetuated in the early Councils.<sup>1</sup> In the Tribunate there was only one new man who was destined to make his mark. Benjamin Constant, who had wormed himself into it by flattering both Sieyès and Bonaparte, endeavoured to make himself the leader of an opposition of which, as a matter of fact, the elements seemed to have been deliberately collected together.

It was rash of Bonaparte, people declared, and expressed their astonishment. But rather was it Machiavellian. He felt that, should disagreement arise, public opinion would veer to his side; if an opposition should develop, it would be better that, from the beginning, it should be discredited by the very unpopularity which the appointments made by Sieyès would inevitably lend it. And indeed, the public were disgusted. "From eternal Conventionals, Good Lord deliver us!" wrote the *Diplomate* on the 18th Frimaire, before the appointments were made. On the 22nd Nivôse, as soon as they were published, another newspaper gave voice to the general consensus of opinion when it inveighed in violent terms against "this new nobility," "this privileged caste,"

<sup>1</sup>The French Revolution, pp. 452-454.

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which had once again been put into power. And already there was a movement, in the name of the "mass of the citizens," to get Bonaparte to prevent "this band of jobbers who were exploiting France for their own profit" from taking their seats in the Assemblies.

Bonaparte was not at all displeased that by the side of this "privileged caste," which had been discredited for years, he should appear in the light of the choice of the Democracy. And thus any opposition on the part of the Assemblies was foredoomed to failure.

\* \* \* \* \*

This was apparent as soon as the first session of the Legislative Body opened on the 11th Nivôse.

Ignorant of the trend of opinion we have just described, the Opposition in the Assemblies was already seething with excitement. For some weeks past Sieyès had been unable to conceal his bitterness and he infected with it these "non-realists" whom Bonaparte, under the appellation of *idéologues*, was so cruelly to ridicule. As a matter of fact, nearly all of them had approved of the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, hoping that behind the back of this young General, who had had no experience of politics, they would have the reins of Government in their own hands. It is almost incredible that they should have been guilty of such a colossal mistake. In any case, finding that he was determined that his ideas should prevail over theirs, they were now up in arms and already crying "Dictator!" As a man he was beyond their comprehension, but their eyes had been opened and they were resolved to hold him in check.

Furthermore, a politician had just come to the fore, an eloquent orator, who, having arrived upon the scene too late to play a part in the great struggles of the rostrum, hoped to revive them. Benjamin Constant was a superior type of intriguer, all temperament and brain, in every way the opposite of Bonaparte, and irrevocably doomed to come into conflict with him. A charming intellectual, but nothing more than an intellectual, this native of Lausanne was a passionate "non-realist." Eaten up with ambition, but not

**Benjamin  
Constant.**

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incapable of cowardice, he might perhaps have recoiled before the dangers which were to confront him had he not fallen under the tyrannical influence of Germaine de Staël.

A few weeks had sufficed to cure this lady of the "mad enthusiasm" with which she had been filled by the rise of Bonaparte.

**Madame de Staël.** The fact was that, like Sieyès, she too had been disappointed, though in a somewhat different way.

A woman who loved to exercise power over men, she had done her best to captivate "the General." But he had somewhat roughly spurned her overwhelming friendship. He had no love for "those Neckers" whose restive daughter she was. She had been immediately filled with a hatred of him which was merely the reverse of her scorned passion, thereupon transferred to Benjamin Constant, the hope of Liberty. She made her famous salon the headquarters of the Opposition, gathering together in it more especially "those tribunes who refused to compete with the sycophancy of the Councillors of State."

Among these tribunes was an unfortunate man named Duveyrier, who was whipped up to a degree of feverish excitement, with the result, however, that for a brief moment he enjoyed quite unexpected fame.

**Duveyrier.** The Assemblies met on the 11th Nivôse, the Legislative Body in the Palais-Bourbon and the Tribune in the Palais-Royal, where they were presented with the Bill for regulating the legislative machinery. The debate on it was to take place in the Tribune on the 13th. But before the debate itself was opened some of the members proceeded to decry the "unseemliness" of housing such an august assembly in the Palais-Royal, which was full of the lowest haunts of vice. It was at this juncture that Duveyrier rushed to the rostrum. True, he declared, they were in "the middle of the haunts of pleasure, of dissipation, and perhaps even of vice," but they were also close to that *Jardin Egalité* where, on the 14th of July, Camille Desmoulins had let loose the mob against the Bastille, and he was glad to think that from the windows of the Palais they could catch a glimpse of those places which, if he might dare to mention an idol of fifteen days, they must bear in mind saw the fall of an idol of fifteen centuries!

It was a fine phrase—nothing more—but it was the first and precisely of a nature best calculated to irritate public opinion,

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already disgusted with phrases in general. The incident, the news of which spread like wildfire, immediately filled the people with an indignation greater even than that felt by the Consul himself. "The idol of fifteen days!" The general opinion was that the severe but courteous note with which the *Moniteur* replied to this intemperate sally was far too moderate. Duveyrier, terrified by the general commotion, made his apologies in the House two days later.

But on the collapse of this nonentity Constant entered the lists. Madame de Staël describes him as having hesitated; he finally made up his mind only when she appealed to "his virtue." Whereupon he pronounced a violent but eloquent diatribe against the Bill on the forms the system organised, denouncing the proposed new régime as one "of servitude and silence."

This time the uproar was terrific. Clearly there was to be systematic opposition to the régime from which the country expected everything. That very evening Germaine de Staël's salon was three-quarters empty, and the Press in bitter and sometimes insulting language turned upon "the two Swiss," "that Vaudois" and that "Genevese woman," declaring they ought to be packed off to their beloved Lake of Geneva post-haste. Bonaparte was severe in his condemnation. "These people," he declared, "will take us back to the worst days of the Revolution," adding, however, "The arm of the nation is on my side." The Assembly appeared to be divided, but some of the tribunes advocated prudence, and in the end the Bill was passed by 54 votes to 26. But it was quite enough for these few hostile phrases to have been uttered against the new régime for public opinion to become alarmed, and *rentes*, which had risen to 30, suddenly fell back to 20, while some of the newspapers urged Bonaparte to dissolve that "Rump Parliament."

But the First Consul had no mind for measures so nicely calculated not to allay but to perpetuate dissensions. He was content for public opinion to go further than he did. He had a violent scene with some of the tribunes which filled them with consternation, but that was all. Madame de Staël, who had expected

exile or possibly something worse, was merely requested to retire to Saint Ouen—the mildest of martyrdoms! Sieyès, who was suspected of having secretly pulled the strings of this political skirmish, did not wait

Departure  
of Sieyès.



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to be asked to go, but went and shut himself up in his house at Auteuil.

The incident had proved to Bonaparte how discredited the rostrum was, but the sudden outburst of opposition had alarmed him all the same. The Press, though it might well have done so, had not followed the lead of this handful of agitators. But if it had, the Government would have felt itself even more seriously hampered in the task of reconstruction. This fear was enough.

In the opinion of the First Consul the newspapers were far too numerous to be adequately supervised. As long as the conflict with the rest of Europe lasted the country was in a state of semi-siege; the Government therefore declared itself authorised to reduce the number of newspapers in order the better to control them.

Number of  
Newspapers  
Reduced.

The decree of the 27th Nivôse reduced the Paris newspapers from 73 to 13 "for the duration of the war." The measure appeared so justifiable that, as one "eye-witness" wrote, "it was only party men who could possibly disapprove of it." And indeed newspapers of the most diverse shades of opinion were allowed to survive, from the *Journal des Débats*, which was reactionary in its attitude, to the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, which snarled at any sign of the counter-revolutionary spirit. The public, far from objecting, even agitated for measures to be taken against the whole of the book trade. And it seems that here too public opinion led the First Consul even more than it followed him.

In any case it followed him, because, without losing a moment, he had set about the task of national reconstruction.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first step to be taken was to provide the country with a proper administration.

There is no need for us to refer again to the state of decay into which the Directory had allowed the naturally feeble administrative bodies created by the Revolution to fall. By setting up merely *elective* and *collective* authorities, whose very origin made them independent of the central power, the Constituent Assembly seemed to have deliberately organised anarchy, which had indeed swiftly supervened, necessitating the despatch, in 1793 and 1794,

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of the rough-and-ready agents of the Convention to all the departments ; while under the rule of the Directory the most appalling chaos had reigned.<sup>1</sup>

As the organisation of justice had been carried out on similar lines, its fate had been no better. The judges, who were elected and subject to re-election, had, as a rule, acted as was only to be expected of officials serving under such conditions, with the result that everything was at sixes and sevens. Even the financial authorities, in spite of the fact that they were still appointed by the Executive, had felt the consequences of the state of anarchy ; and, furthermore, they too were *collective*. In fact everything was directories, committees, councils and boards, bodies with three, five or ten heads, even to the Paris police—the police !—which was entrusted not to one man but to a board, which had no head and was consequently completely paralysed.

“I hope that in a month's time France will at last be an organised State,” wrote the First Consul on the 1st Ventôse of the year VIII.

He had just set up the administrative machinery which was destined to last for such a long time, most of it still being in existence to-day, having survived the man who a hundred and thirty-two years ago thought out every detail of it. So the description of it need not detain us long.

Thenceforward the administration was no longer a *collection* of elected officials, but a strongly organised *hierarchy*, every member of which, including the mayors, was nominated, and consequently controlled, by the central Government.

At the head of the *department* was the *Prefect* ; at the head of the *arrondissements*, replacing the *districts* which were far too numerous, were the *Sub-Prefects*. The *communes* were provided with a municipal council, and the mayor, chosen by the Prefect from among the leading men of the district, was also an agent of the central power. The Prefect was supported by a Council, the General Council, whose chief duty was to arrange for the equitable distribution of the burden of taxation ; but it was also authorised to submit suggestions and statements in support of them. Bonaparte, prompted by the spirit of enquiry which had always

<sup>1</sup>The French Revolution, p. 122.

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characterised him, aimed at making these General Councils important information bureaux which would provide "a list of abuses to be redressed and improvements to be introduced."

Owing to what was certainly an exaggerated swing of the pendulum, the outstanding characteristic of the system was the state of tutelage to which the communes were reduced. Endowed with considerable power by the revolutionary Government, they had, as a rule, proved themselves incapable rather than subversive, having, more often than not, chosen as their leaders not the flower but the dregs of the inhabitants. Chaptal, who was shortly afterwards given the portfolio of the Interior, declared with some truth that the Minister had really become "the chief guardian of the French communes."

But the Minister of the Interior was also the chief guardian of many other people. The whole of the strict hierarchy which had

The Minister of the Interior. been established was dependent upon the Ministry which, owing to the existence of the Ministry of General Police, was almost entirely relieved of the

political part it plays to-day and able to devote itself to the colossal department which, including, as it did, commerce, industry, agriculture, public works, education and poor relief, fully deserved its title of Ministry of the Interior. Beugnot, its first General Secretary, was able to declare soon afterwards that the famous law of the 28th Pluviôse of the year VIII had made this Ministry "the heir of the Sovereign People."

The law of the 27th Ventôse organised the administration of Justice, which has not been changed to this day, whilst the

Justice. Prefecture of Police, as we now know it, was also

created on the 17th Ventôse, and put an end to the anarchy which for the last ten years had reigned in the large towns. Moreover, General Commissioners of Police, now non-

Police. existent, were entrusted with the task of supervising the great cities, the large ports and the

frontiers. There is no need to discuss at length the huge financial administration which still exists. Suffice it to say that here too everything was graded and strictly ordered.

During the last hundred years various criticisms, often fully justified, have been made against this monumental achievement of the year VIII. It weighed like a mill-stone about the neck of

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the nation. But, to quote a famous remark, "Europe really envied France for it." Probably a Bonaparte would have been the first to be surprised that his work should have inspired such respect, and would have introduced many alterations, for undoubtedly the First Consul's chief aim at the time was to create an instrument suitable for reconstructing a country handed over to him for that purpose in the year VIII.

It was then a completely disintegrated country ; the Revolution had broken up its social as well as its administrative framework, and the whole fabric was crumbling to dust. The Great Man could make this dust a solid block once more only by shutting it up in the brazen mould with rigid sides and symmetrical pattern which he had designed. The institutions of the Consulate were devised for a particular period and a particular set

France a  
Centralised  
State.

of circumstances. But they have survived precisely because, in addition to this, they were in keeping with the spirit of centralisation which

eight hundred years of experience had imposed on France, and because they were adapted to the Latin character as well as to the national needs of a country exposed more than any other to attacks from neighbours and forced to present the solid and impregnable front of a centralised state.

As a matter of fact this administration maintained its value for a long time. Throughout the many vicissitudes of the nineteenth century it formed the solid framework which, if I may say so, enabled the country to indulge in six changes of régime with impunity and on occasion to face disasters without flinching. That in the year VIII of the Republic it met the demands of public opinion as well as the exigencies of the situation allows of no doubt whatever, and this was certainly the main consideration which, in that critical year, guided Bonaparte, as First Consul.

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But the whole of this organisation was, for the time being, merely an instrument in his hands. Bonaparte never confounded the means with the end, and the end was, through the medium of his new agents, triumphantly to impose that policy which, in spite of opposition from various quarters, now in any case

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considerably reduced, he had more than ever set his mind on promoting.

"The difficulty is, not to give orders, but to get them carried out," he declared. It was not enough for him to have an idea, or even to have agents; he had to have good agents. And this explains the exhaustive, though at the same time rapidly conducted campaign of work to which the whole Government now devoted itself under his guidance, with the object of finding the first Prefects. Bonaparte had no intention of The Prefects taking them all from one group; eclecticism in the choice of officials was to constitute a further manifestation of that conciliatory policy, the application of which was to be the primary concern of his Prefects.

Here again he intended to borrow chiefly from the personnel of the Revolution, though, as a matter of fact, he looked for them not in any single party, but in a dozen, from the Liberal Constituents of 1789 to the rough Conventionals of 1793, alike among proscribers and proscribed. He even contemplated the addition "of worthy folk who did not belong to the active Royalist party, but were reasonable supporters of the principles of 1789," and even disillusioned Royalists who, after Brumaire, had rallied to the support of a Government standing for law and order.

Nearly all the more important prefectures went to old Conventionals, among them being that rough diamond Jean Bon Saint-André, an extremely hard worker who had been a member of Robespierre's Committee, and was destined to be Prefect of Mayence till his death. And what a wonderful Prefect he was! Nineteen of the first Prefects to be appointed had sat in the "Giant Assembly," and eleven of these nineteen had, in January 1793, "voted for the death." Among the erstwhile members of the Legislature of 1791, one Beugnot had sat on the Right, and one Riouffe on the Left. But the most interesting choice of all was to be found among the old Constituents in the person of Mounier, the ex-leader of the "monarchian" party, the hero of the "Tennis-Court oath," who was shortly afterwards appointed Prefect of Ille-et-Vilaine. The *Ancien Régime* provided, for the time being, an extremely small contingent, though in the year VIII the list of Prefects contained such names as La Rochefoucault, Herbouville and Ligniville, not to mention Barante,

who only a short while previously had been so mistrustful of Bonaparte's future. Ligniville was a soldier, of whom there were several, including five Generals, among them one La Chaise, who was so enthusiastic an admirer of the genius of the First Consul that one day he exclaimed, "God made Bonaparte and rested from his labours."

To the prefecture of the Seine, the first to be organised, Bonaparte appointed Frochot, who in the Constituent Assembly had been one of Mirabeau's colleagues. This Bur-

**Frochot.** gundian ex-lawyer, a simple, good-natured, honest, hard-working and extremely conscientious man, was, on account of his sterling qualities, excused from having to make any display of servility. "What, a man imbued with the principles of 1789 and still endorsing its theories!" Yes! But Napoleon never asked anything from him but work; he did not expect whole-hearted compliance. And the fact remains that he held the most important prefecture of France for twelve years and without making any fuss about it performed a gigantic task.

The eclectic spirit also made itself felt in the choice of functionaries of every description, more particularly in the legal appointments, among which the names of a Séguier, a d'Aguesseau and an Espréménil, so well known in the old *Parlement*, appear side by side with those of men who had been judges of the revolutionary tribunals. And yet the proportion of old revolutionaries was perhaps slightly larger here than elsewhere; Cambacérès, who was almost solely responsible for the names submitted, included among them those of old friends who had held extremely advanced views, which led to the accusation that "judgeships had become sinecures for Jacobins." But Bonaparte was determined not to allow the flagrant miscarriage of justice that had existed under the Directory to be continued, and insisted on receiving the new magistrates himself. "When a man demands justice at your hands you must never enquire what party he belongs to," he told them. This command, which to-day appears superfluous, constituted, in the year VIII, a prodigious innovation, and was certainly the cruellest condemnation of the fallen system it is possible to imagine.

Such, in any case, was the ever more clearly defined spirit of the new Government. Eclecticism in the choice of officials was

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merely one of its manifestations. Every Frenchman, regardless of his birth and opinions, was called upon to collaborate in the great work of conciliation, which was absolutely essential for the reconstruction of the country.

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## CHAPTER V

### NATIONAL ARBITRATION

"The Government will no longer tolerate any parties." The policy of Concordats. The great arbiter. The task of the Prefects. The restoration of the finances; the Bank of France. The offer of peace to Europe; it is refused. Obstacles in the way of arbitration. The pacification of the West. The interview between Bonaparte and Cadondal. The Opposition intimidated. The installation in the Tuileries. Attempted revival of parties; the masses on the side of the First Consul. Bonaparte expects everything from victory.

**T**HE Prefects left Paris without delay. It was high time for the provinces to be given the Consul's orders through them, for passions were giving themselves free play there and seizing the opportunity, while the great arbiter still remained unrepresented, to do as they pleased.

**Abolition of Parties.** "The Government will no longer tolerate or recognise any parties, and will deal in France only with Frenchmen." This was the most important sentence in the circular which, on the 9th Germinal (30th of March, 1800), Lucien Bonaparte, the Minister of the Interior, addressed to the new Prefects. It put in a nutshell the whole policy of the Consulate.

The time had come when it could be imposed, and Bonaparte was on the point of engaging in the finest battle he was ever destined to win, that prolonged battle of eighteen months which, opening with the first conciliatory measures, was to end with the signing of the Concordat.

**The Policy of Concordats.** The Concordat! But could not his whole policy be described as a series of Concordats? As I have said, there was division everywhere. And to put an end to it, were there any who would bring themselves to acknowledge defeat, or any who were in a position to claim victory? And who was to settle between the parties? The supreme power. Was this a great innovation? By no means;



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for the highest and possibly the most fundamental duty of power had always been to act as arbiter. Yet never, since the great religious wars, had dissensions been so fiercely acrimonious or

arbitration been so necessary as in the year VIII of the Republic. Thus Bonaparte assumed the rôle of supreme arbiter, and we can almost see him sitting in the shade of some huge "Vincennes oak" to adjudicate between one Frenchman and another.

"The Revolution is over," he had proclaimed, but this was to be to the advantage of one and all. No reprisals, therefore, no reaction, no revenge! To every party he pointed out what it had to lose by a prolongation of the state of anarchy which was big with deadly peril for every one of them, and he urged them all to forgive one another in order to be able to work honourably side by side for a Government which would not be dependent upon any of them.

This was the great work of arbitration undertaken in the year VIII.

Every individual was called upon to play his part. And Bonaparte, although naturally imperious, constituted himself the accommodating agent and, to use an expression he was very fond of at this time, the advocate of the *mezzo termine*. "The Government is acting as an intermediary between all parties," wrote Lucien Bonaparte in his name, "with a view to reconciling them all if possible." This was the Government motto for the year VIII. Both publicly and privately its chief continued unremittingly to preach oblivion of all the old tags. "Surely," he wrote to one old revolutionary, "the plain title of French Citizen is quite as good as that of Royalist, *clichien*, Jacobin, *feuillant* and those thousand and one sects that spring from the spirit of faction and, for the last ten years, have been trying to hurl France into the abyss!" Michel de l'Hôpital had made a similar famous remark in connection with the "Papists" and the "Huguenots."

The Prefects were entrusted with the task of putting this policy of wise moderation into practice everywhere and, as agents of the supreme arbiter, of being each in his own department the arbiter in all local disputes—always the most embittered. A few of them who, like the ex-Conventional Delacroix in the Bouches-du-Rhône, were still

The Task of  
the Prefects.

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too much imbued with the partisan spirit, did not succeed in being impartial, and the Consul quickly called them to order or even dismissed them. But the majority displayed goodwill and a conciliatory spirit in their sphere of office. "You are possibly a little bit aristocratic," observed the Consul Lebrun to Barante, one of the "men of the Right," who had been made a Prefect, "but there is no harm in that, provided you don't go too far. You must show care and discrimination."

"Care and discrimination"—that was precisely what most of the Prefects of the year VIII brought to bear on their task. The frequently enthusiastic and lasting admiration with which they were soon to inspire their subordinates was deeply impregnated with the memory of the early days when these *missi dominici* had reconciled conflicting interests and put an end to apparently implacable strife.

And this was the policy which the consular Government carried out in all parts of the country.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile, confident that this policy would succeed in winning the support of the nation, the Government pursued its work of reconstruction.

In spite of the measures taken in the beginning by Gaudin, the finances still remained a source of anxiety to which it was imperative to put an end once and for all.

The first Budget was being drafted. Bonaparte was in favour of a "patriarchal system." To all suggestions of meeting

expenses by means of heavy taxation, he replied, Finance.

"There is another way of making our receipts greater or at least equal to our expenditure, and that is *economy.*" And leaving Gaudin to study the possibility of any particular form of taxation, he had accounts submitted to him personally, ruthlessly mowing down abuses, suppressing fraud, and forcing the Government contractors to disgorge. Gaudin, on the other hand, was looking for sources of revenue. Direct taxation had become an intolerable burden and taxable property was breaking up under the load. Reverting to sound financial doctrine, Gaudin restored indirect taxation—the future General Board (*droits réunis*)—which from the year VIII onwards was to yield forty

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millions. Furthermore, taxes long since overdue at last began to come in. "I do not think," wrote Barbé-Marbois, "that the history of French finance affords another example of such a sudden change from hopelessness to confidence." But in spite of this the rumour—incredible indeed!—that *rentes* were going to be paid again was met with a certain incredulity.

The Consul, who hated the financiers, was determined to free himself from the bonds with which they had weighed down the Directory. But just because he was anxious to rid himself of this incubus and of those whom a short while back he had dubbed "bad business men," it was expedient to have a privileged and strictly controlled bank with which to deal. At this time there were five or six banks issuing notes, and more particularly the *Caisse des Comptes courants*. This latter institution was asked to go into liquidation, but only to be reconstructed on a new basis.

The Bank  
of France.

On the 28th Nivôse (18th of January) two decrees were signed by which the Bank of France was founded and established as the only concern authorised to issue notes. During the first years of its existence, in spite of having to tread with caution, it won such a sound position that the paper money it issued, which, owing to recent bitter experience, was at first somewhat gingerly handled, was soon preferred to gold. "As cash is so plentiful," somebody wrote a few years later, "paper is preferred to coin."

With the Budget for the year IX balanced, the Treasury once more replenished and the Bank of France established, the financial problem was well on the way to being solved, and the Consul already felt his mind relieved of its most pressing anxieties. And it was high time; for at this same juncture he had to make his preparations for imposing peace by means of victory, a task which he could accomplish only if he were provided with what will always remain the sinews of war.

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On the very day on which the Consulate was definitely established, Bonaparte had in the noblest possible manner offered peace to the King of England and the Emperor of Austria, as he had done immediately after Brumaire. But he could not have nursed any

Offer of  
Peace.

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illusions regarding the outcome of this move. We know the position between Europe and France ; it would have been nothing short of a miracle if these two appeals had led to the laying down of arms. In the winter of 1800 France had been driven out of Italy, she was menaced on the Rhine, and England was holding up her best armies in Egypt. Europe still hoped to crush and despoil her.

The King of England did not answer, but on the 3rd of January (14th Nivôse) Lord Grenville sent an extraordinarily impertinent note to Talleyrand. After inveighing bitterly against the "aggressions" of which France had been guilty for the last six years, it declared that England could not enter into negotiations

with anybody except the Bourbons, who must be restored. And Pitt mounted the rostrum and called upon the world not to place any trust in the new leader the Revolution had just chosen, who was the scion and champion of all its atrocities.

As a matter of fact England was still counting on the Austrian armies to force the Alps and the Rhine. She could, in any case, rely on the loyalty of her principal ally. For Austria, once more mistress of Italy, hoped to regain still more territory. The answer sent by Thugut, the Austrian Chancellor, to Talleyrand was such that it amounted to a denial of any claim, and he ended up by saying that in no circumstances would Austria enter into negotiations except at a congress at which all the belligerent Powers were represented, first and foremost among them England, whose courtesy and compliance were declared to be most edifying.

Bonaparte, as I have said, had no delusions regarding the probable reception of his offers of peace. He therefore proceeded to

search for allies among the neutrals. His main hope was centred in Prussia, through whom he counted on approaching the Tsar ; and indeed

there seemed to be some possibility of making the sullen rancour, which for some months past Paul had been nursing against both Austria and England, develop into an attitude favourable to the new French Government. Prussia's response to the overture was extremely cold. She was more than ever determined that she would not entertain any proposals for an alliance with France until the day—in her eyes the extremely problematical day—when the standards of the Republic were once again certain of victory.

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The Tsar, approached, though with but little conviction, by the Berlin Cabinet, let fly a volley of abuse against the "Corsican usurper," whom, he furthermore declared, the inconstancy of a mad nation would undoubtedly bring to ruin before long. This reception of her overture merely resulted in strengthening Prussia's determination to fall upon France the moment she suffered a reverse.

In short, Europe maintained an unbroken front. And once again the sword was called upon to cut the Gordian knot which it had been impossible to unravel.

Truth to tell, the necessity for a decisive victory on the field of battle seemed to Bonaparte no less pressing when he turned his eyes to the state of affairs at home.

It would be a mistake to suppose, as our text-books teach us, that the First Consul advanced with a firm and already despotic step along a path which the enthusiasm of the nation had made broad and easy. On the contrary, a study of the documents shows that six months after Brumaire, when he was not beset by snares, he was constantly held up by obstacles which had to be surmounted or circumvented.

True, he was acclaimed by the masses, who called down blessings on his head for having realised some of their desires. But they were impatient, notwithstanding, having hoped, as the French are wont to do, for a miracle; and when they found that the first measures did not make their daily lives easier forthwith and that the prospect of a general peace was not sensibly advanced, they showed signs of disappointment. Meanwhile, the West was still in arms—a constant menace of civil war kept alive by Royalist intrigues and English subsidies. In Paris, the opposition of the Left, at one time put out of action, was recovering again in the obscurity of the lobbies and the political salons. Even among Government officials there were rumblings of discontent, while in the very bosom of the Consul's family plots were being woven, some of them linked up with veritable conspiracies against him.

The West seemed to be the greatest of the dangers threatening. The armistice, to which the Vendéan leaders had given their consent on the 3rd Frimaire, had expired on the 1st Nivôse: furthermore, it had never included the other parties in the West. As a matter of

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fact, a visit paid to the First Consul by d'Andigné had convinced the Vendéan leader that "the cause was lost," but his friends could not make up their minds to submit and were showing signs of resuming the struggle.

Bonaparte, though he kept Hédouville, who had negotiated the armistice of Frimaire, in La Vendée, despatched General Brune thither armed with strict injunctions to stick his sword into the backs of the recalcitrant leaders, but in the case of the priests to pursue a conciliatory policy calculated "to assuage all passion and ill-feeling."

This policy met with entire success. The leaders could not get anyone to fight again, and it was an Angevin priest, the Abbé Bernier, a rabid partisan who with his own hand had struck down more than one *Blue*, who, having offered himself as an intermediary, persuaded the Vendéan leaders at last to sign peace. On the 28th Nivôse, Hédouville granted the insurgents full pardon; the Catholics were allowed freedom of worship, the recalcitrant priests the use of the churches, the leaders had their names expunged from the list of *émigrés*, while the departments, which had first risen in rebellion and had subsequently been ravaged, were to be relieved of all taxation for three years. The treaty was signed by d'Autichamp on the 28th Nivôse, and the rest followed his example. And thus La Vendée, the cradle of insurrection in the West and for a long time its main stronghold, was pacified for fourteen years. As a matter of fact, the insurrection had spread; Brittany and Upper Normandy still remained in arms. The main centre of disaffection was Morbihan, where

Cadoudal. Georges Cadoudal, a haughty and terrifying "brigand," whose hardened fanaticism was the outcome of his plebeian origin, was directing his scattered bands from a hidden retreat, and the Bocage Normand where the Comte de Frotté, infuriated with Bonaparte, refused to follow the example of his noble brethren in La Vendée.

Bonaparte was determined to hound down Cadoudal and ferret out Frotté; it was imperative to put an end to this war before embarking on another. Georges, surrounded, and on the point of being abandoned and captured, submitted with fury in his heart. Whereupon all the Government forces were turned against Frotté. He hesitated too long before surrendering, and then did

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so only on equivocal terms; he seemed to be on the point of taking up arms again, but in the end delivered himself up just as he was about to be captured.

**Frotté.**

He was condemned to death. Bonaparte, informed of his capture, sent orders for stay of execution, but the Norman chieftain had already been shot. The First Consul took the matter philosophically—the execution meant the end of civil war in the West. He had the news conveyed to the Legislative Body, the members of which, breaking their constitutional silence for a moment, shouted as one man, “*Vive la République!*”

Cadoudal—and this looked like a victory of a different nature—consented to go to Paris. The First Consul offered him the rank of General; Georges’ reply was a sullen and somewhat rude refusal. Bonaparte, seeing that he was a “churlish lout,” gave up all idea of winning him over, and forthwith treated the uncouth plebeian with a lofty contempt which the latter never forgave him.

Meanwhile the Consul was encountering opposition of a very different nature from other quarters.

It came, in the first place, from the Assemblies. The Bill for the formation of the administration had given rise to considerable excitement in the lobbies. Daunou, who was extremely hostile to Bonaparte, had been entrusted with the task of drawing up the report on it, and regarding it as a first step towards despotism, had overwhelmed it with criticism. But, under pressure of public opinion, he had in the end agreed that it should be passed, concluding “that it would be dangerous to take up too much time in perfecting it.” The Bill for the organisation of justice had been violently attacked by the tribune Thiessé, and had been passed by a narrow majority of two, while the Legislative Body had thrown it out by 190 votes to 95. The Council of State had been obliged to have it back for revision. Truth to tell, however, the Opposition confined itself in the main to murmurs. Public opinion was too strong for it. As the tribune Sédillez remarked, “We are hustled along in a whirlwind of urgency.” “It can be perfected later,” Daunou had declared. Even in the Council of State the Consul felt that there was opposition to all reparatory measures which could be regarded as being in any way reactionary.

Bonaparte was obliged to humour all these people because just at this time—and it was a critical moment—he was taking up his

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quarters in the old royal palace of the Tuileries. Ever since the 10th of August, 1792, when the "little corporal" had seen Louis XVI dragged out of it by the jeering and insulting mob to the Salle du Manège, the Tuileries had served only to house the National Convention. On the wall of the Palace some coarse hand had scribbled in red the words, "August the 10th," and they had never been rubbed out. On these same walls there was another inscription, an official inscription, which read, "Royalty in France is for ever abolished."

But by the Constitution the Tuileries had been made the official residence of the Consuls. Bonaparte, who for two months had been living in the greatest simplicity at the Luxembourg, was fully aware that residence in the Palace would entail pomp and ceremony more befitting the head of a State and that the most trifling details would give rise to malevolent criticism.

He waited for the result of the plebiscite to be published. As we know, 3,011,007 votes were cast in favour of the Consulate to 1,562 against, and he wished to give the installation in the Tuileries the appearance of a popular and military festival. The people were invited to attend. At three o'clock on the 30th Pluviôse, as soon as the carriages bearing the Consuls drew up at the gate of the Palace, the General, leaving his colleagues to go in without him, asked for his horse, and spurring it into the Carousel, rode rapidly in front of the assembled troops. The crowd, electrified, shouted, "*Vive Bonaparte!*" and it was only after he had been thus acclaimed that he entered his new domicile, where the first thing he did was to preside at a sitting of the Council of State, as though he were once more protecting himself against the world behind the assembly in which so many "regicides" had seats, and which he had installed in the Palace of the Kings at the same time as he took up his abode there himself. The crowd were given permission to go over the Palace, where a bust of Brutus, the tyrannicide, was seen to occupy a prominent position. To such shifts was the Consul reduced to make his gradual rise to power acceptable!

Nevertheless, the extremists continued to frown on him. He pretended to take no notice, and absorbing himself in affairs of state, tore himself away only in order to appear at military reviews to receive the acclamations of the crowd, or to share in the



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labours of the illustrious members of the Institute. On the 15th Germinal he had himself appointed to the Chair of the "five classes" for a period of three months, and thus it came about that the Battle of Marengo was won by a President of the Institute. He flattered not only the leaders of thought, but was, at this period, affable, cordial, considerate and even obsequious, alike to Councillors of State, Generals and Ministers.

**Bonaparte  
President  
of the  
Institute.**

He was obliged to be. The nearer the time approached when the Consul was expected to leave for the seat of war, the clearer became the signs of renewed party activity. "Party hatred is smouldering rather than extinguished," was the report from Paris. And it seemed to be reviving even in the heart of the Government.

**Revival of  
Parties.**

Talleyrand and Fouché, the leaders of two diametrically opposed political and social groups, hated one another, and these two unfrocked priests were temporarily united only by their common fear of seeing the Catholics regain influence, which occasionally led them to combine against any attempt at reaction and to oppose Lucien Bonaparte, the Minister of the Interior, whose inordinate ambition led him to advocate a dictatorship in the hope that, in case of accident, he would inherit it. Carnot, who had become Minister for War, a loyal and sincere Republican, hated Talleyrand and Fouché, but was also perfectly ready to oppose Lucien. He had brought with him to his office the rude and disagreeable manners which had made him so unpopular with his colleagues under the Directory. These ministerial squabbles, kept alive by dissensions throughout the political world, had their echo in the salons, the newspaper offices, the various groups in the Institute, and even in the Consul's own family. The First Consul, said Beugnot, "kept everything together"; but as soon as his back was turned, the wrangling became worse than ever. It was only by the exercise of constant supervision that he succeeded in making all these people accept his leadership for the time being.

There was also a military faction which was perhaps the most disquieting of all. The leading Generals felt they had been defrauded by the advent of a man, whom they regarded merely as a distinguished rival. Bernadotte, Jourdan, and even the mediocre Augereau,

**The Military  
Faction.**

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all exclaimed, "Why Bonaparte?", and Moreau who, over-zealous in the cause of his friends, had done what he could to help Bonaparte, now proclaimed his regret. As a matter of fact the latter covered his mistrustful comrade with flattery. But Moreau, though not daring to enter the political arena, nevertheless allowed the malcontents of the Left to exalt his republican virtues at the expense of the ambitious designs of Bonaparte. Bernadotte, more outspoken than the cold Breton, launched out

The Anarchists. into violent abuse. This "fortunate *cadet de Gascogne*" was, in the opinion of one observer, "capable of anything." The extremists tried to exploit these malcontents for their own purpose. While the "anarchists" confined their disloyalty to words, "above all whispering in the ear of the soldier that he was being sent to be butchered," the Royalists took more active measures and hatched

The Royalists. various plots against Bonaparte. Whilst they endeavoured to revive *chouannerie* in the western provinces and even in the south, the Royalist

Committees in Paris, who claimed to be acting in the name of the Princes, were spinning a web of conspiracy, and Cadoudal was hurling into the capital bands of unemployed

The Catholics. Chouans destined for what he called "the essential blow"—the murder of the First Consul. Meanwhile, as the Catholics were trying to use the liberty they had regained to

The Philo-sophers. harass the Consul in his work of restoration, the "Philosophers'" party took umbrage at the smallest incident, and the Institute, as well as the lobbies of the Tribune, re-echoed with their complaints.

The great mass of the people, however, indifferent to the demands, the protestations and the opposition of the parties,

The Masses. remained loyal and gave the Consul the utmost credit. They were pleased at the revival of old

festivals, such, for instance, as the Carnival and the Mi-Carême. According to one report, it was more especially among the workers that an increase of confidence was to be observed, while the peasants shared the sentiments of the worthy Beauceron, who in his rustic diary wrote, "At present he [Bonaparte] gives justice where it is due . . . He is a man of God!"

Neither Bonaparte nor the opposition was ignorant of these

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sentiments. The First Consul regarded them as a further incentive to proceed. If, by means of a brilliant victory, he restored peace to the nation, there would be no limit to his popularity. This was precisely what the parties most feared, and many a politician, whether of the Right or of the Left, might have exclaimed with the outraged Germaine de Staël, "For the welfare of France reverses are essential."


Whether such reverses were desired or not, certain it is that everybody was ready to turn the first defeat to account in order to serve his particular coterie and his own private interests. And it was this that made the public so anxious about the Consul's departure for the Army. Three times it had been announced that he was going, and three times the rumour had proved false. "Everybody is talking about his going," wrote one correspondent. "Some pin their hopes to it, others fear it."

Bonaparte himself was anxious to go. It was only prudence that had led him to defer his departure, but he was convinced that, from every point of view, it was imperative for him to win a victory. "A victory," he remarked to Joseph, "will leave me master to do as I choose." He had no anxiety regarding the outcome. Never had he felt himself so securely borne aloft on the wings of fortune. He already knew how he would surprise the enemy and where he would strike.

He left on the 16th Floréal, certain of victory, and therefore certain of ruling.

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## CHAPTER VI

### MARENGO

Renewal of hostilities. Masséna in Italy and Moreau on the Rhine. Formation of a third army. Masséna besieged in Genoa. Delays on the part of Moreau. First successes in Germany. Departure of Bonaparte. The Saint Bernard. The invasion of Lombardy. Melas hastens up. The Battle of Marengo lost, then won. The Convention of Alessandria. Negotiations opened with Rome. Intrigues in Paris. The return of the First Consul. The effect produced by Marengo. The 14th of July, 1801.

**E**VER since the 9th of April (19th Germinal) hostilities had been resumed in Germany as well as in Italy. Austria felt she had every ground for hope. The victories she had won in 1799 were still too close for her to feel any qualms. She counted upon completing the task of clearing the river at Genoa of the French and then hurling herself on to Provence. This victory was to fall to the lot of Field Marshal Melas, while in Germany Field Marshal Kray was to content himself with keeping watch on the movements of the Rhine Army. Europe and a large number of people in France were of opinion that the Republican armies were exposed to defeat on all sides.

In the whole of Europe, Bonaparte was the only person who did not regard the situation as desperate. According to him the Austrians were committing "a gross blunder in entering the blind alley formed by the river at Genoa"; their country had not sufficient forces at its command to risk the main body so far from the "hereditary states"; and while she might have tried to force the Rhine and enter France through Alsace, she had made up her mind to attack by way of the Maritime Alps! In so doing she laid herself open to attack on her flank.

At first Bonaparte had been of opinion that it would be best to attack her on the German side. To cross the Rhine south of the Black Forest and thus unexpectedly penetrate into the valley

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

of the Danube, to make a rapid descent of the river and carry the war swiftly to the very gates of Vienna—such was his intention. If Bonaparte were at Ratisbon, Ulm and Vienna, what good would it do the unfortunate Melas and his 120,000 Austrians, even if they did succeed in reaching Nice?

As a matter of fact he was reserving the command of the army in Germany for himself, and if he had carried out his original design he would never have known Marengo, but would have had Austerlitz and the peace dictated at Schönbrunn a few years earlier. But he was anxious, both from the point of view of soothing a malcontent and of employing a distinguished soldier,

to give an important command to Moreau. Moreau, however, refused to accept anything except the Rhine Army, and Bonaparte handed it over to him, together with the 120,000 men which at that time constituted the only serious force the Republic possessed. The Army of Italy, reduced to 31,000 men by the reverses it had suffered, was confided to Masséna with orders to hold Genoa at all costs.

The First Consul would at least have liked to prevail on these two generals to carry out the plans he had made. Masséna was

to have kept his little army well together and not

Masséna. to have worried about Nice so long as he could cover Genoa; for Melas would never have dared to push on into France leaving 30,000 of the enemy in his rear in Liguria. But this Masséna failed to grasp and allowed his troops to be scattered, with the result that he was cut off from part of his army and with diminished forces had to hurl himself into Genoa, where he was forthwith besieged. Moreau, to whom Bonaparte had suggested attacking the Black Forest on the south, which would have driven in the enemy's flank and undoubtedly ended the war, also either failed to understand or else took umbrage and did not carry out his instructions. Dessoles, his Chief of Staff, who was summoned to Paris, was unable to report that his chief had acquiesced in the plan. Thus did Moreau forfeit the palm of glory. "What Moreau does not dare to do on the Rhine," observed Bonaparte to Dessoles, "I am going to do in the Alps. In a little while he may regret the glory he has surrendered to me!"

As a matter of fact, he had, as usual, thought out another plan, the execution of which he reserved for himself. While Moreau, attacking as he thought fit, would at least hold Austria's German army in check on the Upper Danube, and Masséna would confine to the Riviera the forces which the enemy had so imprudently risked in Italy, a third French army, known as the Army of Reserve, and secretly formed at the foot of the Alps, was to strike the great blow in Lombardy.

Bonaparte did his best to conceal its formation and above all not to reveal its objective. As a matter of fact, it was this army, regarded by Europe as "ridiculous," which he destined for striking the great blow. Rapidly gathered together, as soon as Moreau had had his first success and had thus diverted the attention of the Aulic Council of Vienna to himself, and before there had been time for Masséna to be driven into the sea, this army was to swoop down on Lombardy by way of the Alpine passes which debouched to the north of the Po valley, and take Melas in the rear. This "thunder-bolt," by destroying the enemy's hopes, might perhaps force him to open negotiations.

The veterans set free by the pacification of the West, the reinforcements originally destined for the Egyptian Army and the new "Consular Guard," who were to form the nucleus of the Army of Reserve, were to be supplemented by the raw recruits hastily raised by the conscription of the year VIII. Spurred on by the new Prefects, the conscripts had poured in almost with alacrity. "You must inspire these young citizens with the enthusiasm which has always been characteristic of the French," wrote the Consul to the Prefects. "Let them prove themselves once again what they were in the early days of the Revolution, and the belief that they were called upon to fight on behalf of factions could alone have made them cease to be." The 30,000 conscripts required had before long, almost to a man, joined the colours, their ranks swelled by volunteers, among whom were to be found a large number of young *ci-devants*, now anxious, like Philippe de Ségur, "also to win their laurels."

The need for swift action was imperative, for the situation in

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Italy had become critical. Masséna, as a result of failing to follow the Consul's advice, had met the fate the latter had feared—Melas, on the 5th of April (15th Germinal) had taken the Ligurian Army, too scattered to resist, by surprise, had forced the Apennines, cut off Suchet's corps from Masséna, forcing it to retire on Nice, and pushed the victor of Zurich, thus considerably weakened, up to the walls of Genoa and obliged him to shut himself up in that city. As the place was now invested, how long could Masséna and his army hold out?

It was essential for him still to be there when the Army of Reserve arrived on the Po. It was also essential, before anything else could be done, for Moreau to open his campaign. But the latter, although a distinguished strategist when once he had entered into battle, was always slow to move; moreover, mistrustful to the point of unscrupulousness, he was so suspicious of even the wisest counsels that he would actually do the reverse of what he was advised. Bonaparte, impatient at the repeated delays of this tiresome creature, was constantly imploring him to act. But after the battles in Liguria he was beside himself. "Send him word," he wrote to Carnot, "that his delays are seriously compromising the safety of the Republic." And he despatched Berthier to him from Bâle, with the result that the latter extracted from the procrastinating General a promise to open hostilities at last. Eventually, on the 5th Floréal (the 25th of April) Moreau put the whole of his forces, from Strasbourg to Schaffhausen, across the Rhine, and although he was guilty of the mistake of attacking piecemeal along too wide a front, he succeeded in entering the Black Forest without mishap and seizing the defiles, where on the 13th Floréal (the 3rd of May) Lecourbe, who during the night had been turned out of Stockach, on the north of Lake Constance, surprised an Austrian corps and routed it. Moreau, coming up at this moment with reinforcements, turned this initial success into a regular victory, and by this fortunate stroke once and for all cut the Austrians in Germany off from Switzerland, and thereby prevented them from menacing the eventual advance of the Army of Reserve.

Bonaparte did not conceal his joy: "Glory, thrice-times glory!"  
he wrote to Moreau.

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"Owing to the position in which the Austrian Army in Italy is placed . . . and the fact that the terrible struggle round Genoa has considerably reduced its strength, you will find that 30,000 men and 30 guns will, for the time being, make *you* master of Italy," he wrote to Berthier. "The enemy is very far from expecting the operations *you are undertaking*." This shows that he was so anxious not to betray his secret plan that he even allowed Berthier to think he himself intended to remain in Paris, and even went so far as to instruct him "to advance by forced marches."

But what route was he to take? For the last three months Bonaparte had had report after report sent to him on the subject of the passes. At last, in spite of all objections, he decided on the Saint Bernard. The important point was that in less than ten days they "should swoop down on Italy like an avalanche." In a few days the whole army was massed at the foot of the Alps; whereupon the Consul suddenly left Paris.

At dawn he was tearing in hot-haste along the road to Dijon, where he stopped hardly a moment. He reached Geneva in time to make the final arrangements and immediately pushed forward the advance guards towards Martigny. Nevertheless, from Geneva he sent a pathetic appeal to Masséna, begging him to hold out for a few days longer. "It is in cases like this that you find one man is worth 20,000."

The crossing of the Great St. Bernard began on the 25th Floréal (the 15th of May). It has been described time and again, first and foremost by Thiers, whose account of this epic is a masterpiece, only a few details of which are corrected in Captain de Cugnac's remarkable technical monograph on the subject. The Consul himself did not leave to others the task of describing the difficulties with which he was confronted and blazoning forth the ingenuity amounting to genius with which he had faced them. The bulletin destined to fire the imagination of all is famous: "We are fighting ice, snow, storms and avalanches." The St. Bernard, astonished at

The Saint  
Bernard.



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seeing so many people suddenly crossing it, is putting some obstacles in our way."

The main obstacle arose out of misleading information—the importance of the fortress of Bard, which stood at the head of the road to Italy and was in the hands of the Austrians, had been underestimated. That "cursed castle," as Berthier called it, almost ruined the whole enterprise. It was turned; but some of the artillery was obliged to wait behind until it surrendered, which happened only on the 12th Prairial (the 1st of June), and

**Invasion of Lombardy.** this serious rebuff deprived the army of nearly all its guns at Marengo. Meanwhile, however, it was advancing right into Lombardy; and Lannes and Murat were scattering the astounded Austrians right and left and opening up the road to Milan. "We are falling on these parts like a thunderbolt," wrote Bonaparte to Joseph. To the Consuls he reported: "All goes well! Before the end of Prairial I shall be back in Paris."

It was indeed a thunderbolt! On the 13th Prairial (2nd of June) the First Consul entered Milan "and was greeted with general enthusiasm," due chiefly to the feeling that something miraculous had happened. The whole of the Po valley was occupied—hard on the heels of the imprudent Melas.

Even the Austrian reports give a vivid description of the disorder which this sudden irruption caused in the ranks of the subordinates Melas had left to guard the conquered territory. However, immediately on this, the event which Bonaparte had most feared took place

**Capitulation of Genoa.**

—after a heroic siege, Genoa capitulated on the 15th Prairial, though the terms were such that, according to one of Masséna's officers, "the vanquished seemed to lay down the law to the victor." Melas had consented to them because, warned of the terrifying apparition of Bonaparte at Milan, he was filled with alarm, and his one thought was "to cut his way out to the hereditary states on the right bank of the Po . . . at the same time protecting the western Tyrol, which was also menaced." In fact only twenty-four hours after he had been expecting to enter Nice at any moment the Austrian leader's one thought was to protect the Tyrol, which was also menaced." In the circumstances it might almost be said that, even before Marengo,

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the aim Bonaparte had in mind had already been largely achieved !

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It was only to be expected, however, that the Austrian Field Marshal, threatened with a terrible disaster, should use all the forces at his command to avert it. The Austrian soldiers, brave fighters on the field of battle, felt the danger, and their fear acted as a spur to their valour. On the 23rd Prairial, Lannes at Casteggio hurled himself against the Marshal's advance guards. The Austrians fought with admirable courage, but Lannes, whom one of the soldiers described in a letter as "being covered with blood," stormed the heights of Montebello, which were held by the enemy and dislodged him, killing 2,104 and taking 2,175 prisoners. This apparently cut off Melas's retreat. "I don't see how he can possibly get out of it," Bonaparte declared on the 20th, adding, with a sigh of regret, "If only Genoa had been able to hold out for seventy-two hours longer, we should have been able to count every man who escaped from that army."

Melas, with the courage of despair, decided to force the road to Piacenza, and, in order to do so, to make himself master of the village of Marengo, which commands the plain. Misled by information given by a prisoner, and convinced that his adversary would attempt to find an outlet preferably to the south, Bonaparte had separated the corps entrusted to Desaix from his main body. Desaix had arrived only on the previous day from Egypt and Bonaparte, who both loved and trusted him, had ordered him, if occasion arose, to bar the path he thought Melas had chosen. But as the latter might also try to make good his escape northwards, another corps, under the command of Lapoye, had been sent in that direction. Thus the army, which had taken up its position in the plain of Marengo, had been weakened by two corps, whereupon Melas, convinced by the movements of the French troops that an attempt was being made to surround him, suddenly on the morning of the 25th Prairial (14th of June) took the offensive against Marengo itself. His 30,000 men were confronted by only 20,000 Frenchmen, but his real superiority lay in his artillery. He had 100 guns, to which, as we know, Bonaparte had only 15—just one or two batteries !

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Under the Austrian attack, Gardanne, driven back on Marengo, held his ground there like grim death. Lannes, hurrying up to the rescue, tried in vain to launch a counter-attack; the village was lost. The movements of Victor's corps, who, after putting up a stubborn resistance, was obliged to abandon it for lack of artillery, involved the retreat of the whole army to the east, in the direction of San Giuliano. At two o'clock it seemed as though the battle were lost and Melas were free to push on; in fact the latter sent a despatch from Alessandria to Vienna announcing his victory, whilst, from San Giuliano, a similar message was conveyed through some mysterious unknown agency to the political groups in Paris.

But Bonaparte, who had been on the battlefield himself since nine o'clock in the morning, had sent orders to Desaix and Lapoype to rally their forces. Moreover, the mere sight of the Consul restored confidence to the men. "He appeared," declared one of them, "and we were twice as strong." The same soldier describes the great man impatiently making the pebbles fly with his riding-crop. He sprang on to his horse, shouting out to his soldiers, "Courage! The reserves are coming up! Hold on!" And indeed the retreat, which as a matter of fact had been carried out without panic or disorder, had been arrested, whilst the Austrians, thinking they had won, had relaxed their efforts and were in that dangerous condition when everything can be jeopardised by a vigorous counter-attack on the part of the enemy.

Suddenly Desaix's division was seen approaching from the south. The young General, on receiving his orders to return, had hastened his march, and a few minutes later, at three o'clock, he joined Bonaparte at San Giuliano. "Hullo, Desaix, what a mix-up!" observed the Consul with a smile. "Well, General, here I am; we are fresh, and if need be, we'll get ourselves killed!" was the reply. And suddenly the French counter-attack was let

Desaix Killed.	loose. The Austrians, though taken by surprise, offered a brave resistance; Desaix, who was urging on his men, fell mortally wounded. But
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the enemy, who, according to Victor, remained "terrible" up to the very end, "regular lions," were unable to hold their ground. The French entered Marengo again and Kellermann, by a magnificent charge, put the finishing touch to the rout of the

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Austrians ; the gallant adversary was seized with panic and the retreat developed into a rout. Prisoners were brought in by the thousand, twenty-six guns were taken and twelve standards, whilst the bodies of 8,000 Austrians lay scattered on the field. The sun was hardly setting when, after thirteen hours of fighting, the battle ended in a signal victory, which was to reverberate like a decree of Fate throughout the whole of Europe.

The next day, the 26th Prairial (15th of June), Melas, shut up in Alessandria, signed the convention which with one stroke of the pen delivered into the hands of the victor the whole of Italy and its strongholds as far as the Mincio. "You see," wrote Bonaparte to his colleagues on the 29th Prairial, "we have done a fairly good job in double-quick time." It was Cæsar's *Veni, vidi, vici*.

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His presence was no longer required. Leaving Masséna in command, he decided merely to settle one or two matters before returning to Paris.

The reorganisation of the Cisalpine Republic, now bound more closely than ever to France, and the establishment of a provisional Government in the Piedmont while awaiting its exchange or annexation, were in the opinion of the First Consul mere trifles compared with the important task which now lay before him—the *rapprochement* with the Court of Rome with a view to the conclusion of a religious Concordat.

For the last eight years at least France had been anathema in the eyes of Rome. Ever since 1789 grievance had been added to grievance, injury to injury, while the most violent prejudices complicated the situation still further.

Bonaparte was determined at least to put an end to the latter. On the eve of Marengo he had received the clergy of Milan and had literally astounded them by the quite unexpected tribute he paid to the Catholic religion, "the only one which gave to man

certain and infallible enlightenment regarding his beginning and his final end." On his return to Milan after his victory, he had ordered a solemn

*Te Deum* to be sung in the Cathedral and had been present in

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person. "To-day, in spite of anything our dear atheists in Paris may say," he wrote to the Consuls, "I am attending the *Te Deum* with great pomp and ceremony." The whole of Italy was bewildered almost to the point of consternation.

Both actions had, as a matter of fact, been performed with a view to impressing, not Milan, but Rome, where it was necessary to create an atmosphere favourable to any overtures he might choose to make.

The situation was fairly propitious, though superficially it did not appear to be so. Pius VI, as we know, had died in France, and the Papal States, from which the French had been driven, were occupied, Rome being in the hands of the Neapolitans and the Marches in those of Austria, both of whom, in spite of protestations of devout Catholicism, were determined not to restore anything to the Pope until further orders. The Conclave, which was sitting in Venice and was riddled by Austrian intrigues, had elected the man considered to be the Austrian candidate as well as the representative of the most extreme counter-revolutionary tendencies, namely, Gregorio Barnaba Chiaramonti, a monk who had been made Bishop of Imola, and now ascended

Pius VII.

the Throne of St. Peter with the title of Pius VII.

The new Pope immediately appealed to Europe to have his States restored to him, but as the Powers in occupation turned a deaf ear, he made up his mind to return to Rome notwithstanding. He made his way to the Eternal City by sea, though even he was doubtful whether he would find his States vacated. But a pleasant surprise was awaiting him; he discovered that both the Austrians and the Neapolitans had cleared out of the territory they had conquered, the reason being that on the 14th of June—the head of the French nation had defeated the Austrians at Marengo, which paradoxically enough led to the head of the Catholic world deriving the greatest benefit from a victory won by the miscreant nation. The impression made on the Pope was simple but agreeable—Bonaparte had become the instrument of Providence.

At this juncture Pius VII received a letter which filled him with the deepest emotion. Dated the 26th of June and bearing the signature of Cardinal Martiniana, Bishop of Vercelli, it informed His Holiness that the First Consul had presented himself

before the Cardinal and, in formal terms, had signified his intention of "re-establishing religion" in France by the conclusion of a Concordat, of which he had there and then traced the rough outlines, most of the terms being extremely acceptable. Cardinal Martiniana's impression of the young leader of the French nation was favourable to the point of being wildly enthusiastic. Whilst the Curia, profoundly agitated, were deliberating over this astounding proposal, Bonaparte had recrossed the Alps, and for the second time he might have written that he had "done a fairly good job in double-quick time."

Return of  
Bonaparte.

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Nevertheless, it was not without a certain feeling of dull irritation that he made his way towards Paris, having meanwhile learnt something of what had been going on in his absence.

The political world, not to mention the Government itself, had not staked on a victory; the majority of people, moreover, were of opinion that, whether beaten or not, Bonaparte, by constantly exposing himself to danger, was running the greatest personal risks.

As a result the hopes of the Royalists had revived. Cadoudal was preparing his "essential blow" in the event of the Consul returning alive, and a certain charming member of the fair sex, belonging to the Faubourg Saint Germain, was exhorting the Court of Louis XVIII, at that time resident at Mittau, "to make ready to seize the spoils as soon as *he* chooses to give up the ghost or they can kill him." The "exclusives" of the Left also met together; it was rumoured that Barras and Merlin de Thionville were feeling their way with Sieyès, whom, after the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, they had at first covered with contumely. A few of them were even in favour of combining with the Royalists.

Intrigues  
in Paris.

But the most lively intrigues were those taking place in the bosom of the Assemblies, in the various groups of the Opposition, which had grown bolder since the Consul's departure. Preparations were being made for an alternative Government, and in this connection La Fayette, Carnot, Fouché and Talleyrand were being approached. Even in Bonaparte's own family conspiracies were

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being hatched. Lucien, professing the most profound contempt for the two Consuls, who, in the absence of their chief, were carrying on the Government, was taking a high hand preparatory to seizing the power himself, whilst Joseph's friends were also advancing the claims of their own member of the Bonaparte family. Fouché, though actually holding office, was hobnobbing with Sieyès, who, at his home in the village of Auteuil, then in the depths of the country, was secretly receiving all the malcontents. Already the Minister of Police was conveying to the Royalists that he was not so far as they imagined from favouring their designs. Talleyrand, for his part, though pretending not to care, certainly seemed to be lending a ready ear to the advances made to him, while the military faction, deprived of Moreau, had turned to Bernadotte, who, albeit with caution, was encouraging active measures. The intrigues overlapped and sometimes counteracted each other. Future triumvirates were planned; rumour had it that Carnot, La Fayette and that colourless individual, Senator Clément de Ris, formed one of the suggested combinations. Sieyès was responsible for innumerable combinations of the kind.

The two Consuls, for their part, seemed to have been struck blind. Shortly afterwards, Bonaparte, turning to Cambacérès, in the middle of a sitting of the Council of State, observed: "I may be killed. . . . Then it will be your turn to govern, and you are not firmly seated in the saddle."

Suddenly, on the 1st Messidor, the news, the false news, that Bonaparte had been defeated was received, and a rumour having spread that "a great General," whose name was not mentioned, had been killed (it was Desaix), anything seemed possible—the defeat and death of the Great Man. And the intrigues, which until that moment had remained prudently skulking in the background, became partially revealed. Fouché found himself being approached by all those who preferred to look before they leaped.

Then, lo and behold! on the 3rd Messidor (22nd of June) a courier arrived from the First Consul bearing the news of the victory and announcing his immediate return.

**The News of  
Marengo.**

The political world rushed to the Tuileries and an avalanche of congratulations poured down on the First Consul's wife. Meanwhile, the crowd, animated by feelings of real sincerity, was wild with enthusiasm. "The name of the

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First Consul is in all men's mouths ; it is uttered with loving tenderness, and so great is the joy that it almost surpasses belief." The news was proclaimed at the Bourse by one of the stock-brokers, who was, according to one report, "visibly moved" ; and for good reason, for in a single hour the *tiers consolidé* rose eight points, jumping from 29 to 37 *livres*. Illuminations, balls and processions were hastily improvised. Four days later the following report appeared : "At the present moment all faction is at an end ; the Government has a huge majority behind it." Georges Cadoudal, who only a day or two previously had informed his Chouans that "all was ready," abandoned the struggle for the time being ; the Assemblies, including the members of the Opposition, hastened to the Tuileries, with protestations of joy. The news, wrote a Royalist agent, "was like a thunderbolt, and upset all calculations."

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On his return Bonaparte was everywhere given a triumphant welcome, though he himself maintained a modest attitude throughout. On the 12th Messidor he arrived at the Tuileries, where he found Ministers and Councillors of State drawn up awaiting him. The

Bonaparte  
Welcomed.

expressions on some of the faces must have been curious to observe, and it is a pity there was no Saint-Simon present to make a note of his impressions. The people surged up to the Tuileries. "Almighty God has saved us !" shouted a woman. "From that day," observes a historian hostile to Napoleon, "the people believed in his star, and thought he had a mission from heaven."

He too felt this and regarded himself as ten times stronger than he had been before his departure. But, little by little, he had learned the truth about the plots that had been hatched against him. As soon as he was back again one Minister denounced the other, while Sieyès disowned them all. At this juncture the Opposition seemed to be paralysed by fear as much as by a newly acquired respect for the Great Man. Hyde de Neuville, an uncompromising Royalist, wrote : "Marengo has been the baptism of Napoleon's personal power." Another Royalist confessed that "he seemed a giant," while Beugnot shortly afterwards remarked to Beurnonville, on the latter's return from Berlin : "Two hundred



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years have elapsed between to-day and the day you left Paris ! ”  
He had been gone four months !

The First Consul was fully aware that his power had been increased tenfold. He pretended to despise the intrigues of the past few months and, because he had need of them, retained the Ministers who were suspected of having had a share in them. “ There are some servants,” wrote a contemporary in this connection, “ by whom one loves to be robbed.” The only people into whom he instilled fear by means of threats and menaces were the Chouan conspirators. But towards the other plots he assumed a curious attitude, one of somewhat bitter disillusionment rather than of anger. From that time forward people noticed that he displayed less confidence, less “ lightheartedness.” “ I am very old as far as the human heart is concerned,” he now remarked with a bitter smile.

On the other hand, he had felt the heart of the people beat in unison with his own. All the reports confirmed this—the lowly had placed their trust in him and had rejoiced over his victory as their own, and already these enthusiastic masses were clearing the path before him and dragging him forward. A rumour, which was favourably received, suggested that he was to be made “ President for life with the right of appointing his successor.” Bonaparte, however, had not yet reached this point. Before putting the coping-stone to the work of reconstruction it had to be completed. In any case it was necessary, before doing anything else, to bring the war to an end.

In Germany it was progressing favourably owing to Moreau's successes, by means of which he had forced Marshal Kray to sign at Parsdorf, in the heart of Bavaria, the armistice which, following hard upon the Convention of Alessandria, silenced the roar of the guns for the time being in Europe. Bonaparte was awaiting a plenipotentiary from the Emperor to negotiate terms of peace ; he was also awaiting a messenger from Rome to prepare a peace of a very different nature.

He was anxious for the celebrations of the 14th of July, 1801 (the 25th Messidor), to be more solemn than they had ever been before. He called it “ the Festival of Concord.” At the banquet held in the Tuileries he raised his glass and gave the following toast : “ To the

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14th of July! And to the French people, the sovereign ruler of us all!"

He wished them to be the "sovereign" people because he felt they were ready to delegate their sovereignty to him. At the same time he was determined to win it only by means of further benefits conferred.

SOURCES. Work already mentioned by Aulard. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VI. Murat, *Lettres publiées par le Comte Murat*, I. Talleyrand, *Lettres adressées à Napoléon*, published by M. Bertrand. Decaen, *Mémoires et journaux*, II. Coignet, *Cahiers*. Boulay de la Meurthe, *Négociations du Concordat* (documents). Memoirs and Reminiscences by Savary, Thibaudeau, Madame de la Tour-du-Pin.

WORKS. Those already quoted by Sorel, Vandal, Picard, Madelin, Lanzac de Laborie, Gautier. André Lebon, *L'Angleterre et l'Emigration*. Captain (now General) de Cugnac, *Campagne de l'armée de réserve en 1800*, I. *Le Saint-Bernard*, II. *Marengo*. Gachot, *Le siège de Gênes*. Gachot, *La deuxième campagne d'Italie*. Desprez, *Desaix*. Cardinal Mathieu, *Le Concordat*.

## CHAPTER VII

### LAST SIGNS OF OPPOSITION

Europe after Marengo. The Tsar Paul's change of attitude. Cobenzl sent to Lunéville. The festival of the 1st Vendémiaire. The recall of the *émigrés*. Royalist overtures to Bonaparte. Letters from Louis XVIII; Bonaparte's reply. First rally of the elements of the Right. Formation of a Cæsarian party. Lucien's policy. Fouché combats reaction. The opposition of the Left; the "Philosophers' Party" and the Institute. The military faction; it supports Moreau. Complete restoration of the finances; *rentes* paid. Growing popularity of the First Consul. The *Parallèle* incident.

THE boon that the country was most anxious for the Consul to confer upon it was still peace. At one time Bonaparte had hoped that Marengo would prove the means of securing it immediately. And the victory had, indeed, made a tremendous impression upon Europe. The man who was apparently most moved by it was the Tsar Paul; ever ready to pass from hatred to enthusiasm, he was now talking as though it were no longer a matter of the "Corsican usurper," but of a "new Frederick II," with whom it might be possible to come to some arrangement for the reorganisation of Europe on a basis of authority. Bonaparte, striking while the iron was hot, generously sent him back 6,000 Russian prisoners whom he had re-equipped at his own expense, and, furthermore, somewhat machiavellianly offered to hand over Malta to him. The island was being besieged by the English and it shortly afterwards fell into their hands. Suddenly changing his attitude, Paul now urged Prussia to work for a triple alliance against England and Austria which was to include France. Meanwhile, the King of Prussia, overwhelmed by the news of Marengo, was also trying to approach France, and had sent the Tuscan Lucchesini as Ambassador to Paris, instructing him to secure in advance for Prussia part of the spoiliations in German and Austrian

## LAST SIGNS OF OPPOSITION

territory with which Austria might pay for her recent defeats.

As a matter of fact it was above all against England that this new coalition was aimed. "Albion's" abuse of the right of search had turned almost all the nations against her. The result was that whilst Lucchesini went to Paris with proposals for an alliance,

Treaty of San Ildefonso. to which the Tsar Paul was to be a party, Spain, reduced to docility once more by Marengo, signed the Treaty of San Ildefonso with France, and as a token of friendship handed over Louisiana and her share of San Domingo to her in exchange for Tuscany. The latter province had been raised to the rank of a kingdom for the young Duke of Parma, whose wife was an Infanta. These concessions formed the basis of the French colonial Empire in America which was to be created in spite of England and was to take the place of the colonial Empire in Africa, once the dream of General Bonaparte and now in a most precarious state. The treaty was dated the 1st of October; on the previous day a convention had been signed between France and the newly-formed United States which, by restoring friendly relations, at one time threatened, between the two countries, constituted an agreement really directed against the maritime tyranny of Great Britain.

It was against England, above all, that the First Consul wished to strike, more particularly as he felt sure she was behind the last desperate efforts of Austria. At first Vienna had seemed disposed to open negotiations. But Count Saint-Julian, who had been sent to Paris, and on the 28th of July had somewhat hastily signed what really amounted to preliminaries of peace, had been rudely disavowed. For Austria, to whom England had addressed urgent solicitations, backed by a further subsidy of between two and two and a half million pounds, still believed in the possibility of revenge, declaring that, according to information received, the Consul would shortly fall a victim to fresh plots hatched either by the Right or the Left in Paris. At the same time, fearing that the disavowal of the Saint-Julian agreement would give her adversary the full benefit of playing the part of peacemaker

Cobenzl at Lunéville. rebuffed, she made a show of re-opening the negotiations and offered to send Cobenzl, her most distinguished diplomat, to Lunéville to discuss terms of peace. Bonaparte accepted. But as in the meantime

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Malta had capitulated to the English and Alexandria, in Egypt, seemed on the point of following suit, Austria withdrew her offer, declaring that she would discuss terms at Lunéville only if England consented to be represented. The negotiations were to be conducted by the three Powers, which, if England's attitude was confirmed, merely amounted to a temporising proceeding. But as meanwhile Cobenzl had arrived at Lunéville, Bonaparte summoned him urgently to Paris. On the 28th of October he received him in the middle of the night in the Tuileries, and kept him closeted for five hours, alternately threatening and cajoling him. At subsequent meetings held at Malmaison, he laid down his terms. Cobenzl showed no signs of being intimidated, and while he was on his way back to Lunéville, whither Joseph Bonaparte was to follow him and continue the negotiations, the First Consul warned Moreau that he might have to face a re-opening of hostilities. Bonaparte felt strengthened by the change of opinion in most of the Chancelleries of Europe, but he placed even greater reliance in the ever more enthusiastic support of public opinion in France.

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And indeed, after Marengo confidence seemed to have been completely restored, the reason being that, now certain that his authority would everywhere command respect, the Consul had proceeded to inaugurate measures of reconciliation on a grand scale. An envoy from Rome had arrived in Paris, Archbishop Spina, whom Bonaparte put to confer with the Abbé Bernier, the Angevin priest whom he had employed for the pacification of the West, exhorting them both to secure religious peace with the utmost possible speed. At the same time he was planning to expunge from the odious list of *émigrés* such large categories of proscribed that, at least until such time as a complete amnesty had been granted, it would be reduced by half. The restoration of religious worship and the recall of the *émigrés*, however, were not to be mere isolated acts; and in order to make plain to all his desire to reconcile past and present, he decided that the festival of the 1st Vendémiaire (21st of September), the anniversary of the foundation of the Republic, should take the form of a brilliant act of homage paid to all the national glories. There was to be

Festival of  
the 1st  
Vendémiaire

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a ceremony in honour of two great soldiers of the Revolution, Desaix and Kléber, who had fallen on the same day, the former at Marengo, the latter in Egypt by the hand of an assassin. This was to be preceded a few hours earlier by a triumphal procession which was to escort to the Invalides the remains of Marshal Turenne, the great soldier of the time of Richelieu and Louis XIV, torn from the tomb in a moment of revolutionary frenzy. The two ceremonies were to be fused into one symbolic whole; and they were celebrated in the spirit of unity and goodwill which was everywhere becoming apparent.

The most delicate task, however, was that of recalling the *émigrés*, consisting of about a hundred thousand Frenchmen, who had been turned out of their native land and were frantically anxious to return after their long exile. They were not all—very far from it—those *ci-devants* who between 1789 and 1791 had shaken the dust of France off their feet through hatred of the new state of affairs and, misled by passion, had taken service under Condé's colours against their country. The majority had merely fled from certain proscription after 1791, and amongst them were a number of men of virtue and valour, capable, as Bonaparte declared, of making "good subjects."

But so great was the detestation in which the Emigration was held in France that, among the masses, it constituted one of the most stubborn sentiments, and had been further aggravated by the fear with which the thought of the eventual return of these *émigrés* filled the minds of those who had meanwhile acquired a share of the public lands. Thus, even in the circles most favourably disposed towards the Consul, the liveliest opposition was to be expected.

Bonaparte decided to take no notice of this. "It is one of the sores of the Republic," he once wrote, with reference to the Emigration, "and we must cure it as quickly as possible." As good luck would have it, Fouché, the member of the Government who represented the Revolution in its most ferocious aspect, was not as hostile as might have been expected to the measure, and while advising against an amnesty, suggested the recall of the *émigrés* by *categories*, which would leave in the hands of the police the task of controlling their return as well as of keeping an eye on

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

them subsequently. The power of the Minister would thus be greatly increased.

Bonaparte made up his mind. The decree of the 1st Vendémiaire of the year IX (20th of October, 1800) arranged for such large categories, drawn up by Fouché, to be eliminated from the list, that its numbers fell from 101,000 to 52,000.

The *émigrés* immediately rushed to all the frontiers and coasts, for the time being utterly oblivious of their claims, their hearts temporarily overflowing with gratitude to the man who had thrown open the gates of their native land to them. "What a torrent of benedictions will be poured down on Bonaparte's head!" they wrote as soon as the decree was promulgated.

A torrent of benedictions on the one hand; but on the other a fresh outburst of discontent. The parties, for a moment terrified into quiescence by Marengo, seized on this half-measure, which was really stupendous, and used it as a pretext for renewing their opposition. The negotiations, which, as we shall see, were being carried on preparatory to the signing of the Concordat, provided another. It was whispered that, relying on the elements of the *Ancien Régime*, the ex-General of Vendémiaire was going to carve out a throne for himself, and from time to time the lobbies of the Assemblies re-echoed with oaths *à la Brutus*, though they had no sequel.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Royalists, for their part, were also unable to watch the growing power of the Consul without anxiety. While the Committee set up by the Pretender in Paris was content merely to observe the course of events, the agents of the Comte d'Artois tried to create disturbances. But, as a matter of fact, other partisans of the King, anxious to foist upon Bonaparte the rôle of Monk, begged them to wait a little while before attempting to lay him low. The idea emanated from Louis XVIII himself; this lazy solution appealed to a prince who, though for the last six years he had been constantly declaring that "the time had at last come to draw the sword of Henri IV from its scabbard," would have preferred to ascend the throne of his ancestors without incurring any risk.

## LAST SIGNS OF OPPOSITION

A host of intermediaries offered their services. Josephine, reputed to be a Royalist, was approached; the **Royalist** Consul Lebrun was approached; the Minister **Overtures.** Talleyrand was approached.

Meanwhile, Louis XVIII, imagining the ground was well prepared, made up his mind on the 20th of February, 1800, to write himself to the "General." The letter **Louis XVIII's** now seems almost comic. It contained the following words: "You have accepted a distinguished **Letter.** position and have earned our approval." And it proceeded to promise that, if he turned this distinguished position to account in order to restore the Crown of France, "the blessings of future generations" would be his reward.

Bonaparte, who had already received semi-official suggestions, had always shrugged his shoulders at these simple-minded overtures. The Duchesse de Guiche had perfectly seriously assured Josephine that if the Bourbons were restored to the throne by her husband, they would raise a column in his honour, surmounted by his statue. "It would have my body for a pedestal," had been his response to this inducement. Once again his reply gave evidence of extraordinary perspicacity, for, at this very moment, some of the Royalists were writing that if the King were restored they would know how to rid themselves of this "new Duc de Guise." But the Consul supported his personal reasons by an argument which had some show of justification: "I might recall the King and place him on the throne. I could do so in six months. But what would be the purpose? The difficulty is not to restore the King, but to restore royalty." This was perfectly true. Had he wished to restore the Monarchy of the *Ancien Régime* whose representative at that time was Louis XVIII, he would have been unable to do so. As a certain functionary of the new *régime* remarked, "From this time forward France was not a mere matter of barter between two pretenders." The Consul had left Louis XVIII's letter unanswered for months, and the latter had returned to the charge after Marengo. In hesitating to restore the throne of France, Bonaparte, he declared, "was losing precious time." Whereupon, the First Consul made up his mind to put an end to the illusions, more or less sincere of the "Roy," and this he did on the





## LAST SIGNS OF OPPOSITION

most capable and therefore the most likely to be chosen, he did everything in his power to create a situation which might in time raise him to the giddiest heights. He turned his sister Élise's salon, which he used as his own, into the focus of a society working in favour of reaction, both political and religious, hostile alike to "philosophism" and to the Revolution; aiming above all at securing the triumph of a strong governing power, it endeavoured to place it in the hands of "the man chosen of God." Fontanes was working on a pamphlet destined to cause a great stir and entitled *Parallèle entre César, Cromwell, Monk et Bonaparte*, which drew the conclusion that as he was far superior to the first three, Bonaparte was destined for a far higher position for the honour and glory of France. Lucien lent the support of ministerial authority to this budding campaign.

Bonaparte was still only half-heartedly in favour of the project. Furthermore, although his family was encouraging him in the idea, it had a determined opponent in the Consul's immediate circle. His wife Josephine was watching with the greatest anxiety these preparations

Josephine's  
Attitude.

for making her husband's position hereditary; they greatly increased his regret at not having a direct heir and would thus undoubtedly pave the way for the divorce his family was constantly demanding, and which for so many years was to be the nightmare of the unfortunate woman's life. Endowed with but little capacity for lofty ideals, this indolent creole, who had her cunning side, made a policy of her fears and did all she could to discourage in Napoleon, who loved her, any idea of so dangerous a rise.

Furthermore, she had allies, more or less temporary, in the very bosom of the Ministry. Lucien was hated by his colleagues, above all by Talleyrand and Fouché. Talleyrand treated him as an adventurer, a "swashbuckler," and disapproved of his activities as being, to say the least, premature. As for Fouché, he was frankly hostile both to Lucien and to his policy.

Fouché—that "inscrutable Minister," wrote Madame de Damas—was inscrutable only to those who did not know him

well. Undoubtedly, at this time, by humouring every party, he frequently disconcerted those who regarded him as being devoted heart and soul only

Fouché's  
Policy.

to one—the revolutionary party. But his own private policy

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was still strongly opposed to all reaction. He kept on good terms with all the parties of the Left and, furthermore, in the exercise of his delicate functions, showed such obvious qualities of tact and perspicacity that they always disarmed Bonaparte's suspicions. Although he was not in favour of reaction he was well aware that he could not prevent it ; all he wished to do was to keep it within bounds and prevent matters from developing too fast. This led him to oppose Lucien's intrigues which he too regarded as premature.

He placed his faith in the Opposition of the Left, from the uneasy members of the Assemblies to those very "anarchists" whom he was constantly saving from the consequences of their petty plots. Extremely irritated by the indifference of the people some of the latter were, indeed, sharpening their daggers, but they were generally quietly arrested or charitably warned ; in any case they were saved by Fouché before they had time to carry out their murderous designs, which, in the Minister's opinion, would only have served to hasten the reaction which he feared.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Opposition of the Left was also hatching conspiracies in the Assemblies, the Institute and the General Staffs. Senators and tribunes met in the salons of friends and swore to save the "dying Republic." In the Institute, above all, irritation was great, but anxiety was even greater, for a violent campaign, centring in Lucien, had been inaugurated against what one lampoon described as that Institute "that atheistic ruck and scum, which preferred the republican pig-sty of Andrieux, Chénier and Merlin to the Royalist pearls of the Abbé Delille." Sieyès, the High Priest of the Moral Sciences section, was the bond of union between the malcontents of the Institute and those of the Assemblies.

They all fondly imagined, in spite of their disillusionment after Brumaire, that they could once again find a soldier to support them, and that all they had to do was to choose their man. Though the mass of the army was in favour of Bonaparte, quite a powerful group of officers who had been put on half pay—the *demi-soldes* of the Consulate—were agitating in military circles against the

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"traitor" who was about to deliver up the Republic into the hands of the "clerics." Their hopes were centred in members of the higher command, "true friends of the Republic," whose exasperated ambitions they encouraged.

One of the most virulent was Bernadotte. But this haughty native of Béarn, who was clever, not to say cunning, whilst loudly proclaiming that "the usurpation of the Corsican whipper-snapper" must at all costs be prevented, would never have dared to go beyond words, having no intention of sacrificing "to the cause" the advantages he enjoyed through his relationship with one of the Bonapartes, his brother-in-law Joseph. He contented himself with conferring with his dissatisfied comrades—Masséna, who had recently fallen into disfavour for reasons that were anything but creditable; the coarse and plebeian Augereau, who regarded himself as "pure"; Lecourbe, another "pure"—in doctrine but not in morals—ten other distinguished soldiers, and even the worthy Lannes, who, though he was a faithful friend of Bonaparte, nevertheless declared that "he was sorry to see that the Revolution was on the down grade." But it was a rats' council; none of them dared to bell the cat. They looked round for a leader to place at their head and chose Moreau.

The latter's German victories had added still further to his reputation; they had also inflated his pride while at the same time adding to the list of his grievances. In spite of the extraordinary consideration shown him by Bonaparte, he regarded himself as having been sacrificed. From the very beginning of the campaign he had taken offence at the advice tendered by the First Consul, and was almost equally annoyed—so embittered had he become—by his vociferous praise. But he was a timorous, unenterprising creature, ill-suited to politics, awkward and cold; nevertheless, well aware that he was consumed by jealousy, supporters flocked to his side. His brother, the tribune Moreau, wrote to him from Paris that "everybody was extolling him to the skies"; they "were extolling him to the skies" only out of opposition to the First Consul. Nevertheless, when, on the 26th Vendémiaire, he returned to Paris, Bonaparte received him with open arms, overwhelmed him with flattery, and arranged festivals in his

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

honour. But his arrival, according to one report, had "served to redouble the efforts of all the parties," a statement which is confirmed by what we now know of the intrigues afoot at the time. Moreau, however, who, in politics as in war, was a genius at retreat, seemed at first inclined to slink away. After appearing in the political world looking extremely bored, he eventually accepted the mission which Bonaparte, anxious to put a stop to all these intrigues, offered him—that of resuming command of the army of Germany and, this time, of delivering the knock-out blow. He took his departure on the 26th Brumaire, to the bitter disappointment of all the parties. "*Diou vivant!*" exclaimed Bernadotte (this was his pet curse) "we should never be able to rely on that fellow!"

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Nothing of all this escaped Bonaparte, and surrounded though he was by intrigues—both Left and Right were plotting against him—he did his best to carry on the Government calmly, his one desire being to ascertain the temper of "the people" and to win the approval of the masses.

This meant everything to him. And, indeed, the country was beginning to see the results of the first measure adopted by the Consulate. At long last the finances were recovering and money was flowing into the Treasury. The public had been given practical proof of this when, on the 26th Thermidor, it had been announced that the payment of *rentes*, which had been suspended for six years, was going to be resumed. "It was a memorable event," writes Marcel Marion, "the equivalent in our financial history of Marengo in our military history." And, indeed, when, on the 1st Nivôse, the holders of *rentes*, who had received the announcement with some incredulity, were actually paid their quarter's dividends, they could hardly believe their senses. The general satisfaction was reflected in a sudden rise on the Bourse, the *tiers consolidé* soaring from forty-two to fifty, and then to sixty francs. "The financial chaos has been reduced to order, equilibrium is being restored, credit has recovered, the list of bankrupts has been closed, *rentes* are punctually paid, the property tax has been reduced, and the levy for the upkeep of roads.

## LAST SIGNS OF OPPOSITION

has been lowered"; such is the balance-sheet with which, after forty pages in support of his statement, the historian of our finances presents us. Meanwhile, the roads were being rebuilt and so vastly improved that the German Campe, when he visited France again, could hardly believe his eyes. Business was reviving everywhere, in the provinces and above all in Paris, so much so, indeed, that Frochot, the Prefect, was actually afraid that there would be too large an influx of workers into the capital, where everybody was hard at work, producing, and making money. "No unemployment!" had been the Consul's orders, and everybody, whether in private enterprise or in the public service, was employed. Moreover, the peasants, convinced by the solemn assurances of the First Consul that the return of the *émigrés* and the restoration of religious worship depended upon a formal renunciation of all claims on the part of the former holders of property that had been sequestered, the peasants—and there is abundant evidence of this—set to work with solemn joy and, according to the reports of the Prefects, blessed their return to labour. And thus, already thoroughly satisfied, everybody expected everything from the Great Man. "Every day sees minds restored to serenity, hearts opening to hope and learning once more to love," wrote the Prefect of Drôme, to which the Prefect of Var added his testimony: "In addition to shouts of *Vive la République*, we now hear *Vive Bonaparte!*"

Of all this the First Consul was fully aware, and it gave him strength and encouragement. "Up till now," he remarked to Roederer, "the people have spoiled me. They forestall my wishes as I forestall theirs, and I am extremely grateful to them."

Nevertheless, he continued to act with the greatest circumspection. The "anarchist" plots were, as a rule, quietly suppressed; although, on the 18th Vendémiaire, Aréna, Ceracchi and some others were found lying in wait at the Opera with murderous intent and arrested, the First Consul refused to allow Masséna and Bernadotte to be implicated in the investigations that followed. Rightly or wrongly, these two were held to have been compromised. And when, on the 10th Brumaire, the pamphlet entitled *Parallèle entre César, Cromwell, Monk et Bonaparte* appeared, and, through the officious zeal of Lucien, was presented

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

to each of the Prefects, the Consul, who may perhaps have tacitly consented to this propaganda, quickly gave way to the urgent representations of Fouché, and, agreeing that undue haste had been shown, did not hesitate to take away the portfolio of the

**Fall of** Interior from his brother and thus give satisfaction  
**Lucien.** to the representatives of the Left, whose condolences

had been conveyed to him by the Minister of Police and Moreau. He knew how to wait, and he was waiting until such time as the people should be indebted to him for a further boon, the boon they craved above all—peace with Europe.

**SOURCES.** Works already mentioned by Aulard and Bailleu. *Lettres de la Comtesse d'Albany*. Boulay de la Meurthe, *Correspondance du Duc d'Enghien*, I. Memoirs and Reminiscences by Pasquier, I., Madame de la Tour-du-Pin, I., Thibaudeau, Malouet, Desmarest, Bourrienne, Hyde de Neuville, Roederer, Barante, Madame de Chastenay.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel, Driault, Vandal, Madelin, E. Daudet, Marion, Lanzac de Laborie, Dejean, Pingaud (*Bernadotte*). Holzhausen, *Bonaparte et la Société parisienne*. Sorel, *Madame de Staël*. Guillon, *Les complots militaires sous le Consulat et l'Empire*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PEACE OF EUROPE

The Lunéville negotiations. Victory of Hohenlinden. The league against England. The crime of Nivôse; Fouché threatened; the deportation of the "anarchists"; the arrest of the "Chouans." Fresh opposition in the Assemblies. The annexation of the left bank of the Rhine. The Treaty of Lunéville. England shaken. The bombardment of Copenhagen and the assassination of the Tsar. England, menaced with failure, signs the preliminaries of peace in London. General peace. "The great European family."

**N**EGOTIATIONS were still being carried on at Lunéville, but were making no progress. Cobenzl was obviously anxious that they should be prolonged in order to please

The  
Lunéville  
Negotiations.

England. But the First Consul was determined to clinch matters by delivering a decisive blow. Moreau, as we know, had been entrusted with the task; he was to advance from Ulm towards Vienna by way of the Danube, while Macdonald was to enter the Tyrol *via* the Splügen, and Brune was to force the passage of the Adige and menace Venetia and Friuli. Moreau was not called upon to take the first step, for the Archduke John, hoping to outflank him on the march, ran up against him in the Forest of Hohenlinden. Always an admirable strategist when he was forced to fight, Moreau succeeded in supplying his subordinates with a magnificent plan of battle, which Richepanse, his second in command, carried out so skilfully that by the evening of the 12th Frimaire (3rd of December) the French were masters of the field. The ground was strewn with 6,000 or 7,000 of the enemy, 12,000 prisoners had been taken, eighty-seven guns captured and the remnants of the Austrian army had been forced to flee in disorder. With a determination rare to him, Moreau immediately turned his victory to account. As early as the 18th Frimaire his troops

Battle of  
Hohenlinden.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

crossed the Inn, and on the 23rd the Salza. The road to Vienna lay open before him when, having received no news of the other armies, and seized once again by his eternal fear of advancing, he signed, at Steyer, on the 4th Nivôse, an armistice which, as a matter of fact, delivered the whole of the upper Danube valley into his hands.

Macdonald and Brune, on their side, had penetrated into the Tyrol and Venetia respectively, and thus Austria was defeated at every point. Meanwhile, Miollis, who had been sent to Tuscany, had put the Neapolitans to flight, thus enabling Murat, who had come to the rescue, to impose on these allies of Austria another armistice, which made the French masters of the whole of central Italy. In fact, they were masters of the entire situation.

While, on the pretext of his alliance with England, Cobenzl was prolonging the negotiations at Lunéville, the First Consul had been doing all in his power to form a coalition, based on mutual interests, against that country. On the 8th Vendémiaire (the 30th of September), at Mortfontaine, the residence of his brother Joseph, a convention with the United States had been signed which, by arranging for their common defence against the abuse of the right of search, was destined to paralyse England's activities on the high seas. Shortly after this

Convention  
with the  
United  
States.

Sprengporten had arrived in Paris as the envoy of Paul I, entrusted with the somewhat strange mission of concluding an alliance even before peace between the two countries had been officially signed. The Tsar consented to accept Malta as a pledge—"the apple of discord in the hands of our enemies," as Bonaparte called it—and undertook, if need be, to force England to relinquish the island. Furthermore Paul I, who had now completely turned against "Albion," signed treaties of neutrality with Denmark, Sweden and Prussia, with the object of isolating England; the result was that the First Consul was able joyfully to exclaim in the presence of the Russian representative: "Your sovereign and I have been called upon to change the face of the world!"

Meanwhile, the situation at Lunéville had completely changed, and Cobenzl's one hope—an extremely feeble hope!—was centred

## THE PEACE OF EUROPE

in the conspiracies being hatched in Paris which might possibly result in the death of the Consul and put everything once again into the melting-pot.

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And, indeed, at this very moment, one of these conspiracies resulted in a terrible and unprecedented attempt being made on the Consul's life.

On the 3rd Nivôse (24th of December), as Bonaparte was on his way to the Opera, just as he was in the narrow Rue Saint-Nicaise, a terrific explosion occurred. A huge infernal machine had burst just a few seconds too late to hit his carriage, but members of his suite and passers-by fell dead or dying, though he himself escaped uninjured. He went into the opera house, where the audience, informed of the outrage, gave him an indescribable ovation; whereupon he immediately returned to the Tuileries, whither crowds of horrified visitors were presenting themselves.

**The  
Crime of  
Nivôse.**

Everybody was unanimous—it was the “anarchists” who were responsible for the outrage. Had they not attempted to stab the Consul at the Opera on the 18th Vendémiaire, and, a month later, had not the Jacobin Chevalier been arrested for making just such an infernal machine as the one used? And some added, not without bitterness, that by postponing the trial of the authors of the first crime and by shrouding the second in mystery, somebody had encouraged the miserable wretches to plan this further outrage.

The fact was that there was a whole party—since political passion refused to relinquish its rights—which was determined to profit by the occurrence to oust Fouché from office, a fact which did at least as much as the crime to let loose the storm.

Since the fall of Lucien, the redoubtable Fouché seemed to be in possession of the field. As a matter of fact his policy had led him quietly to suppress “Republican” plots whilst he was constantly exposing “Royalist” intrigues. The former Chouans, by a series of extraordinary crimes—the assassination in Brittany of ex-Bishop Audrein, who had taken the oath to the Constitution, and the kidnapping of Senator Clément de Ris in the very

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

heart of Touraine—had proclaimed their sorry survival ; but the reactionary party more than hinted that these incidents had been engineered by Fouché himself with a view to alienating the Consul's sympathies from the elements of the Right. The crime of the Rue Nicaise was regarded as providing an excellent weapon for ruining a Minister who, by failing to keep watch on the anarchists, had given them an opportunity of executing their fell

**Fouché** designs. When, during the night of the 3rd to  
**Threatened.** the 4th Nivôse Fouché presented himself at the

Tuilleries, he was received with loud murmurs, and even the First Consul greeted him somewhat coldly. He, too, declared with some vehemence that the authors of the crime were "anarchists," and when Fouché looked incredulous, he lost his temper. "It's no good trying to put me off!" he exclaimed. "There are no Chouans or *émigrés* here. . . . I know who the villains are, and I shall make a point of catching them and making an example of them."

On the following day, in the Council of State, he repeated his accusations against the "Septembrists," declaring that a law should be promptly passed authorising their deportation *en masse*. This blind fury was turned to account in order to press for the downfall of Fouché. As a matter of fact, the First Consul seemed inclined to punish him. It was quite possible for a Government crisis to arise out of all this, though public opinion was infuriated only against the authors of the crime, whoever they might be.

The Minister of Police remained quite unperturbed. He knew that only a few weeks previously some agents of Georges Cadoudal, some of the most daring agents—Carbon, Limoélan, Saint-Réjant—had succeeded in entering Paris. He had identified them, and had had them followed, but had unfortunately lost their tracks a few days before the outrage took place. Busily engaged in trying to find them again and in reconstructing the crime, he contemptuously refused to discuss the matter. "He laughs best who laughs last!" he told his friends.

Meanwhile, the Council of State was discussing the subject of repressive measures. It consented to add two clauses to the Bill on special tribunals which had just been submitted to it, one appointing a military commission to judge crimes committed against members of the Government, the other—and this was

## THE PEACE OF EUROPE

flagrantly high-handed—giving to the First Consul the power to remove from Paris any persons whose presence there appeared to him dangerous, and, if they made any attempt at resistance, to have them deported.

**Repressive Measures.**

The measure was so violent, however, that, either in order to avoid a debate in the Tribune or in order to give an enactment obviously dictated by circumstances a more innocent appearance, it was decided that the Senate alone should be called upon to endow it with legal form. The Minister of Police was to be invited to draw up a list of the leading "terrorists" to be deported; the Council was to draft the explanation for this act of proscription; the First Consul was to sign it, and the Senate was to confirm it.

It may have been hoped that Fouché would refuse to have anything to do with the proscription of his old "friends and brethren," which would inevitably mean his resignation. But those who imagined this completely misunderstood their man. He had got on to the tracks of the real criminals again, and required a few more hours in which to lay hands on them. He had made up his mind that, cost what it might, he would remain in office for the few hours during which his career was at stake. He had never been troubled by scruples, and since a proscription list was required, he preferred—even if it was only to save a few old personal friends—to have the task of drawing it up himself. On the 11th Nivôse the list was ready. It contained 132 names.

**Deportation of the "Anarchists."**

On the 15th the Senate was convoked and declared the measure to be constitutional, and on the 16th the proscribed were already on their way to exile. The majority of them were described as "terrorists," "Babouvists," etc. Réal, one of the Councillors of State, who had been a member of the terrorist Commune, and had afterwards defended the Babouvists, was somewhat perturbed by this turn of affairs.

Meanwhile, as I have said, Fouché had got on to the scent of the true culprits again. A series of clues which he had skilfully put

**Arrest of the Chouans.**

together enabled him to identify the authors of the crime. It turned out that they really were the agents of Georges, and that it was Saint-Réjant himself who had ignited the bomb. On the 18th his accom-

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plice, Carbon, who had been arrested, confessed everything; whereupon Fouché, perfectly cool and unperturbed, submitted to the First Consul, who was somewhat embarrassed, the crushing proofs of Royalist guilt. Bonaparte was not a man whose vanity insisted on his being right at all costs, and the Government immediately authorised the Minister of Police to arrest a number of Royalist agents. After this there was no need for Fouché to wait for the arrest of Saint-Réjant, which took place on the 7th Pluviôse, for his triumph to be complete.

The "Republicans" Aréna, Ceracchi and some others had been tried, condemned and executed on the 19th Nivôse. On the 30th Germinal the Chouans Carbon and Saint-Réjant (Limoélan had managed to escape out of the country) met with a similar fate, and were executed to the hooting and booing of the mob. Meanwhile, the 132 anarchists who had been arrested by mistake were on their way to the Seychelles Islands. But the public were only too pleased, for, at one stroke, Paris had, at least temporarily, been cleared of all subversive elements.

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But the outrage of Nivôse was destined to have yet further consequences.

In France itself it had given rise to a most violent outburst of indignation on the part of the people, which was destined to prove of great service to the First Consul. If the wretched creatures, it was declared on all sides, whether anarchists or Chouans, had succeeded in killing him, "the country would have been once more plunged into an abyss of misery." Thus the popular fury expressed itself in a further outburst of affection for the man who had almost lost his life.

He felt himself stronger than ever; indeed, it was obvious to all. For some months past the opposition of a group of tribunes and deputies, not to mention senators, had been exasperating him.

And he gave vent to violent tirades against the "phrasemongers" and "ideologues" who "have always been opposed to the existing authority." Moreover, the Bill for the establishment of special tribunals, which had been laid before the Assemblies, had secured

Opposition  
in the  
Assemblies.

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only extremely narrow majorities. "If people want to grovel in Paris," exclaimed the tribune Chénier, "we shall go and throw in our lot with the soldiers; they will see that we are the true representatives of the people." So systematic was the opposition that when the Budget for the year IX was presented the tribunes criticised the Government for not having exacted enough from the taxpayers.

After Nivôse, Bonaparte, who until then had possessed his soul in patience, gave free rein to his fury. "They are a handful of metaphysicians who are only fit for the scrapheap!" he exclaimed. "Don't imagine that I am going to allow myself to be treated like Louis XVI. . . . I have sprung from the people, and I am not going to stand being insulted like a king." And he made preparations for the "purging" of the Assemblies, being well aware that among the masses not a single voice would be raised in favour of a Chénier, a Ginguené, or a Benjamin Constant, should they be cast out.

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The crisis of Nivôse seemed to have made Bonaparte more irascible than he had ever been before, and on occasion so thoroughly exasperated that those about him were terrified. What had upset him more than anything else was not so much the attempt on his life as the certain knowledge that the incidents, both important and unimportant, which had occurred in Paris were having a deleterious effect on the negotiations with Europe. Everybody had irons in the fire—at Lunéville discussions were being held with Cobenzl, in Paris with the Prussian envoy Lucchesini, the Russian envoy Sprengporten, and the Papal envoy Spina; and, in spite of the military successes of France, none of these people would come to any definite understanding, because the opposition of the various parties, almost as much as the conspiracies against his life, made the position of the First Consul appear unstable and precarious. In fact, at this moment, the crime of Nivôse had almost counterbalanced the effect of the French victories in Germany and Italy.

For, in spite of Hohenlinden, Cobenzl was hesitating to come to terms. At last Bonaparte made up his mind to confront him with

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

the *fait accompli*, at least on one point. Austria was still contesting with France the possession of the left bank

Annexation  
of the Left  
Bank of the  
Rhine.

of the Rhine, and he determined to settle the matter once and for all. On the 12th Nivôse (2nd of January) he had addressed to the Legislative

Body a message which will remain famous in the annals of the "western question"—the problem of the Rhine:

"The left bank of the Rhine shall be the boundary of the Republic. After reinstating the ancient frontiers of Gaul it is the duty of the French nation to restore to liberty those peoples who are united to it by similarity of interests and customs." Four Rhineland departments were accordingly organised and this put an end to all argument on the subject. Cobenzl was not allowed to protest. "If faith is again broken with us," declared the First Consul, "we shall immediately enter Prague, Vienna and Venice." Suddenly the Emperor had sprung to life, rising proud and haughty from the incidents which had all but overwhelmed him.

"Austria is done for," wrote Haugwitz, the Prussian Minister to his sovereign. "It now rests with France alone to establish peace in Europe."

Austria was indeed "done for." On the 20th Pluviôse (the 9th of February), Cobenzl at last gave in on every point, and signed the long-awaited treaty at Lunéville. "It is terrible!" he

Treaty of  
Lunéville.

wrote in despair to his Chancellery. Yes!

"terrible" for Austria, but most glorious for

France. The whole of Italy from the Adige to

Naples was made subject to French law, the left bank of the Rhine, from the North Sea to Bâle, was recognised as French territory, and, as a result of certain stipulations, France was authorised to superintend the changes introduced into the Austrian Empire. This meant the realisation of all and more than all the dreams of the most ambitious members of the Committee of Public Safety and, before them, of the greatest of the Kings of France.

The conclusion of peace was known in Paris on the 28th Pluviôse and the people went mad with joy. On the Bourse the *tiers consolidé* suddenly jumped twenty points, rising to seventy. In the suburbs, the workpeople left their factories and flocked to the

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cabarets shouting "*Vive Bonaparte!*" at the top of their voices. He was acclaimed, says one report, as "the saviour and the father of his country!"

It was clear that England, now without a single ally, would soon enter into negotiations.

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And England did indeed feel rudely shaken. She was passing through an extremely grave economic and financial crisis. The

England masses were suffering cruelly from the war, and  
Shaken. public opinion was becoming agitated. When

Parliament met on the 2nd of February, 1801, an unprecedented event occurred—Lord Fitzgerald confronted it with a demand for an inquiry into the reasons for the failure of English policy.

The words he used were by no means exaggerated. The formidable Tsar Paul, under the pressure cleverly brought to bear by the First Consul, had turned savagely against England, and was clearly making preparations to place himself at the head of a strong anti-British coalition. Pitt, who for eight years had been the heart and soul of the struggle against France, was himself aware that his star was on the wane, and had retired, temporarily at least, on the 8th of February, the day before the Treaty of Lunéville was signed.

The formation of a new Cabinet under Addington did not, however, seem to involve any change of attitude on the part of England. True, she regarded the conclusion of peace as a necessity, but she still thought it could be a peace advantageous to herself. She was victorious everywhere at sea; she had just conquered Malta; she hoped shortly to force the French Army in Egypt to capitulate and then to lay hands on Alexandria. Armed with these acquisitions she would be able to withdraw from the war with both honour and profit.

But it was necessary at all costs to break the circle that was being formed about her, and, by means of some achievement that would reverberate far and wide, to discourage the countries which, one after the other, were joining the coalition that Paul I and Bonaparte were doing all in their power to extend. She therefore seized the opportunity, while her fleet still remained



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mistress of the Mediterranean, to send an army to Egypt to clinch matters there, and at the same time despatched a squadron under

**Bombardment of Copenhagen.** Nelson into northern waters, where on the 2nd of April, having forced the passage of the Sound, he destroyed the Danish fleet and bombarded Copenhagen, a brilliant exploit which struck terror in the

hearts of the northern Powers. Paul I was certainly not the sort of man to have allowed himself to be browbeaten in this way and he would undoubtedly have retaliated. But at the very moment when Nelson was making his way to the Baltic, by an extraordinary coincidence, the Tsar fell by the hand of an assassin.

**Assassination of the Tsar.** The tragedy took place on the night of the 28th to the 29th of March, and as soon as it happened, Nelson knew that the Tsar's successor, his son Alexander, who was hand in glove with the

faction responsible for the death of "the raving maniac," would be impelled to reverse his father's policy. For England this constituted as great a victory as the blow struck in Danish waters.

In Paris it was even feared that the alliances would once more be broken up. Kolycheff, the Russian envoy, presented himself in the city for the sole purpose of protesting, in the name of the new Tsar, against the Italian settlement. As usual, Bonaparte adapted himself to circumstances. As he could no longer count upon Russia, he determined to treat with England single-handed. Meanwhile, however, he seized upon as many pledges as possible, and by way of response to the new attitude adopted by St. Petersburg, he definitely annexed the Piedmont, which he had been holding in reserve merely out of consideration for the Tsar Paul, the protector of the King of Sardinia. He also made a show of preparing for the invasion of England, at the same time making formal overtures of peace in London. Otto, one of his most able diplomatists, who for some weeks past had been charged with the task of arranging a mere exchange of prisoners, was invested with full powers for negotiating peace. But Lord Hawkesbury, who had recently been appointed Foreign Minister, seemed little inclined to negotiate; apparently the Cabinet hoped to derive further advantages from the attitude of the Tsar Alexander, and held back. Thus Bonaparte was obliged to have recourse to more forcible measures—the menace of invasion

## THE PEACE OF EUROPE

appeared to be taking more definite shape and, not confining himself to letters containing references to the project, he began to make preliminary preparations at Boulogne.

England, though not yet seriously alarmed, nevertheless appeared to be anxious. Moreover, it soon became clear to her that she might perhaps have reposed overmuch confidence in the young Tsar, who, however determined he may have appeared not to side with France, proved to be more vacillating than had been expected. Though he had despatched to Paris, in the person of Markoff, a man who was known to be hostile to the French alliance, and ordered him to hold his own against the First Consul, he now sent him more conciliatory instructions which were to result, if not in the actual alliance desired six months previously, at least in a treaty of peace. This was quickly known in London. The British Cabinet, which placed its hopes in the capitulation of the French Army in Egypt, now saw an important auxiliary force collecting at Tarentum and ready to be embarked. Bonaparte, on the other hand, had no illusions. The capitulation of Alexandria might take place at any moment, and he accordingly pressed Otto to redouble his efforts to persuade the British Government, which was now thoroughly perplexed, to sign the preliminaries of peace. English public opinion, excited by the

Peace

Preliminaries

Signed.

*Amiens 1802*

presence of this French plenipotentiary, did not hide its wishes. The Government gave way, and on the 1st of October (the 9th Vendémiaire) Lord Hawkesbury put his signature to the paper which, for the last six weeks, Otto had been stubbornly laying before him.

The document consisted only of preliminaries, but the situation was fairly well defined. England was to return to France and her allies, Spain and Holland, the colonies she had taken from them. Malta was to be handed back to the Knights of St. John in exchange for the evacuation by the French of the Gulf of Tarentum; Egypt was to go back to the Porte, and Portugal, which was to have been occupied by a Franco-Spanish army, was to be restored to independence—that is to say, to the practical suzerainty of Great Britain. Representatives of both Governments were to be sent to Amiens, where, after having formulated the clauses of the treaty, they were to sign the actual peace.

These preliminaries secured for France much more than she

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

could have hoped for after the death of Paul I ; in any case they went far beyond anything she could possibly have dreamed of attaining before Brumaire. Moreover, it was enough for Europe to see the British Cabinet yielding to Otto's persuasion for her to show herself suddenly disposed to side with France. Russia, anxious not to be duped, hastily concluded peace on the 8th of October (16th Vendémiaire), whilst the Porte followed suit. All this conduced to make the preliminary arrangement in London the precursor of a general European peace.

Curiously enough, these auspicious preliminaries did not seem at first to give rise to much enthusiasm in Paris. Ever since 1793 hatred of " the new Carthage " had been so bitter that the plans for invasion, which were known to the public, filled them with delight ; they would mean " the chastisement of perfidious Albion." And, paradoxical as it may seem, it was London that went mad with joy. On the banks of the Thames hats were wreathed with laurel, windows were illuminated, and the masses behaved as though they were intoxicated. When, a few days later, Lauriston, the First Consul's aide-de-camp, arrived in London, bearing the ratification of the preliminaries, the people

**London** took the horses out of his carriage and dragged it to  
**Enthusiastic.** the Foreign Office amid shouts of " Three cheers  
for the French Republic ! Three cheers for  
Bonaparte ! " What a miraculous change ! So great was the jubilation that people were actually trampled under foot. The City was exultant. Lord Minto provides us with the key to this enthusiasm. France would be opened up to British trade, he explained, and Paris would constitute a most lucrative market.

In Paris, the atmosphere was calmer, not to say cold, and foreign representatives expressed surprise at the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the people. In fact, it was so obvious that the First Consul himself did not know what to make of it. The news that the preliminaries had been signed had reached him during a plenary sitting of the Council, and he had immediately fallen on the necks of his colleagues. " What on earth do they want ? " he repeated again and again. The impression produced on him was unfortunate, for it confirmed him in the idea that, whatever happened eventually, and if the peace that had been drafted was

## THE PEACE OF EUROPE

destined to prove abortive, he would have the French people behind him, even more rabid than he was himself against "perfidious Albion."

As a matter of fact, after a few days France recovered from the indifference she had at first shown, and the change took place at precisely the moment when England's delirious rapture had given way to what almost amounted to anxiety. When the preliminaries came to be examined a thousand and one omissions were discovered. There was a violent debate in Parliament and Pitt's friends made their voices heard, Windham declaring that they were a vanquished people, and adding that if the French had conquered the world it was owing to qualities which the English lacked, but which none the less led to Bonaparte becoming "master" of England as well as of Prussia and Spain. The treaty of peace was not signed until the 25th of March, 1802, when, in the opinion of many influential Englishmen, it was already condemned to death.

France, on the contrary, after a curious interval of hesitation, gave way to exultation. In Germinal, the new General Councils of the departments held their inaugural meeting and conveyed to the First Consul the enthusiastic gratitude of the rural population. But what must have been the exultation in Paris when week after week the people, to use Frédéric Masson's expression, were roused

every morning by the news of a fresh treaty of peace being trumpeted in the streets—peace with Austria, peace with Portugal, peace with England, peace with Russia, peace with Turkey! "All the nations envy your fate!" Bonaparte was able to proclaim as early as the 23rd Messidor. And he was anxious for the anniversary of the 18th Brumaire to be celebrated as the Festival of Peace. On that day he addressed another proclamation to the country, one of the finest pages ever written by his pen, or rather, by a heart full to overflowing with legitimate pride: "Faithful to its aspirations and its promise, the Government has not ceded to the lust for

hazardous and extraordinary enterprises. Its duty was to restore tranquillity to humanity and by means of strong and lasting ties to draw together that great European family whose mission it is to mould the destinies of the universe." He did not waste

**General Peace.**  
**The "Great European Family."**

hazardous and extraordinary enterprises. Its duty was to restore tranquillity to humanity and by means of strong and lasting ties to draw together that great European family whose mission it is to mould the destinies of the universe." He did not waste

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

time in enumerating the countless benefits conferred upon the country since the 18th Brumaire and of which the Concordat, now almost concluded, and the signature of the peace treaty with England were to be the crowning glory. Heedless of all else, his eyes were fixed on the future which he envisaged as richer in blessings for France than even that past which could boast of such high achievement. "France will rejoice in peace," declared the *Compte Rendu*; "she will reorganise her colonies and restore all that the war has destroyed. Let us bring to the workshops, to agriculture and the fine arts all that ardour, constancy and patience which, under the most difficult conditions, have filled Europe with astonishment."

Never was a man better entitled to ascend the Capitol. But he had no intention of resting on this bed of laurels. In his opinion, peace should be more productive of glory than the war had been, and already his marvellous brain was busy building the magnificent monument which, both at home and abroad, was to be raised with the help of every citizen of France under the guidance of an incomparable architect.

SOURCES. Works already mentioned by Aulard and Bailien. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VII. Du Casse, *Correspondance de Joseph Bonaparte*. St. de Girardin, *Journal*. Memoirs and Reminiscences by Desmarest, Savary and Roederer.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Vandal, Sorel, Driault, Madelin, Picard, Aulard, Lanzac de Laborie and Marion. Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, II. Forneron, *Histoire des émigrés*, III. Albert Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre*, I. Tatitschef, *Alexandre et Napoléon*, I. Rambaud (Alfred), *La domination française en Allemagne*, I.

## CHAPTER IX

### NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE CONCORDAT

The country's desire for religious peace. The struggle about the churches. Bonaparte's attitude; reasons for the Concordat. Opposition to be feared from various quarters. Pius VII's attitude. The problem of the prelates of the *Ancien Régime*. Spina in Paris; discussions with Bernier. The Church lands. An agreement apparently reached. Talleyrand's intervention. Fouché favours the "Constitutionals." Threat of a rupture. Consalvi in Paris. Further negotiations. Signature of the Concordat.

**P**EACE abroad was on the point of being restored; but before it was established by a regular treaty with England, the First Consul wished it to be definitely secured at home by the conclusion of the Concordat, negotiations for which had been progressing, somewhat laboriously, for the past year.

The Catholics, as we know, were flocking to the churches, which had been thrown open once more by the famous decree promulgated in Nivôse of the year VIII. As a matter of fact, the large majority of the people had remained Catholic and had always hoped to see their "good *cures*" again. At most a minority—though a fairly influential minority—among the provincial Catholics dreaded the return *en masse* of the priests as constituting a menace to the new holders of the old Church lands. But it was precisely the irresistible demand of the country

France  
desires  
Religious  
Peace.

districts for a religious restoration which led the new landowners, whether Catholics or not, to desire, more than any other class of the community, some arrangement by means of which conscience and self-interest might be reconciled, and each receive due satisfaction. In any case the religious revival was spreading like wild-fire; from all the provinces the Prefects reported that the number of worshippers was almost incredible, and that the tide had turned irresistibly in favour of

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Catholicism, which but a short while back had been pronounced "played out."

As a matter of fact, however, all this was not taking place perfectly smoothly. The unfortunate constitutional Church was in her death agony, but from time to time she rallied and endeavoured to regain or keep the sacred edifices she had occupied during her brief spell of glory. This led to violent disputes—"stole squabbles," as they were dubbed by one of the Prefects who, like his colleagues, was embarrassed by these dangerous dissensions.

The "Philosophers' " party, which shortly before had repudiated the idea of all churches, was now supporting the claims of the constitutional priests who had taken the oath. It was exasperated by the Catholic revival, which it insinuated was due to encouragement on the part of the First Consul, and their party

organs, such as *Les Hommes libres* and *La Décade philosophique*, inaugurated a violent campaign against "sacerdotalism" and "superstition."

Struggle  
about the  
Churches.

This party constituted a majority in the Institute; it poured anathema on the priesthood and, bringing its influence to bear on a number of senators, tribunes, deputies and even Councillors of State, kept the opposition to Catholicism alive in the Assemblies.

This opposition was all the more embittered because a regular party, which might almost be called a clerical party, was gradually coming into being, in the immediate circle, moreover, of the Consul himself. Fontanes had made himself the leader of it, and helped to turn the salon of Élise Bonaparte, his intimate friend, into the focus of a neo-Catholicism which had found wonderful support in the talent of Chateaubriand, just at this moment putting the finishing touches to his *Génie du Christianisme*. It worshipped at the shrine of La Harpe, who, though once an uncompromising "philosopher," had, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus, suddenly seen the light and, to the unbounded indignation of the Institute, was hastening to his goal and was, moreover, bearing along in his train a whole group of repentant sinners. "The atheists," wrote one of the reactionary newspapers triumphantly, "are no longer top dogs."

As a matter of fact, they had never enjoyed this position in the

# NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONCORDAT

provinces, where, after six months of the Consulate, the Catholic movement had developed into a regular flood carrying all before it.

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From the very beginning of his tenure of power Bonaparte had been all the more impressed by it because he had been more surprised than anybody.

Attempts have been made to prove that he was naturally a religious man, and a Catholic at heart. Attempts have also been made to prove that, on the contrary, he was fundamentally an unbeliever, not to say an atheist. I have discussed the matter exhaustively elsewhere.

But, paradoxical as such a statement may seem to be, in my opinion the fact that Bonaparte did or did not believe in God does not help us much in seeking for an explanation of the origin of the Concordat. An unbeliever, an atheist, who had never practised the Catholic religion and knew nothing about it before the 18th Brumaire (and there was not much Catholicism about that!), he most probably concluded the Concordat notwithstanding, because it appealed to his realistic mind, not for reasons of sentiment, but because the exigencies of the moment demanded it.

Bonaparte was anxious to establish civil peace. Now, among the elements of discord which divided the nation against itself, he saw clearly that religion was the most bitter. But he also perceived that the dispute was entirely without foundation. The vast majority of the nation wished to return to the faith of their fathers; the fact was patent to all. "My policy," he declared, "is to rule men in accordance with the wishes of the majority." And as exhaustive investigations had been made and had been conducted by agents who were above suspicion, the conclusion was inevitable. "I am extremely powerful," he once observed in the Council of State, after he had become Emperor, "but, mind you, if I wished to change the old religion of France she would rise up against me and overcome me. The Catholic religion is the religion of our country." And this was the conclusion to which the investigations of the year VIII had already led him. To the

Reasons  
for the  
Concordat.

Bonaparte's  
Attitude  
towards  
Religion.



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objections of the "philosophers" his only answer was an appeal to fact: "France demands it."

France demanded it, and civil peace could be secured only at this price. Furthermore, for the last six years he had had his finger on the pulse of Europe and had learnt how much harm the attempt to de-Christianise France had done her abroad. And he wished to disarm the more or less sincere prejudices of Europe, as he had done at Milan. Moreover, he was thinking of the State and, in a larger sense, of Society. In any case the personal services he expected from the clergy preoccupied him less, at this moment, than the necessity of restoring social morality. This idea appeared again and again during his career, and was reflected in various resolutions all of a similar nature. "Religion alone can make men tolerate inequalities of rank, because religion offers them consolation for everything," he once declared in the presence of Roederer. Danton used a similar expression when, from the rostrum in the Convention, he defended the Christian priest because he was "the comforter and consoler."

Obviously, there was nothing very spiritual about these views, but Bonaparte never claimed that there was. Moreover, the idea behind them is not particularly profound. His merit lay, not in having conceived it, but, after having weighed and accepted it, in having translated it into action in spite of everybody.

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Yes! In spite of everybody! Opposition was only to be expected—at least in Bonaparte's immediate circle. "In spite of

all our dear atheists in Paris may say!" he had written to the Consuls from Milan. But there were others besides the atheists, the famous

"philosophers" of the Institute, the progeny of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and d'Alembert; Bonaparte had to be prepared for the exasperated disapproval of many different bodies—the "ideologues" of the Assemblies, the dignitaries of the constitutional Church who, with Grégoire at their head, were making desperate attempts to put fresh life into their sect, the Protestant coterie who, with Madame de Staël, were crying aloud that this was a unique opportunity for playing the part of Henry VIII, and even the section who were not averse to the re-opening

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of the sanctuaries, mistrustful Gallicans—"the Jansenists," as they were called in Rome—who were afraid that the Pope might be called upon to play an unprecedented part. But this was not all!—the Consul was inevitably surrounded by opposition from various interested parties whose activities, though not so open, were more crafty. In the Government itself there was Talleyrand, whose discarded crozier was causing him considerable embarrassment, and Fouché, who had left the Oratory to indulge in the wildest anti-religious orgies. Moreover, among the Consul's General Staff, even outside the secret gatherings at which Bernadotte held forth, there was extreme repugnance to the idea of reverting once more to the "shallow superstition" of the old days; whilst in the Council of State there were all the former Jacobins whom ten years of tub-thumping had accustomed to the practice of contemning "the infernal rule of priests," and *a fortiori* those members of the Assemblies who, though they had hitherto passed all the Bills presented to them, were ready, on this one point, to support the Opposition and combine with it in forming a hostile majority.

But what did the Great Man care for the rancour of a Talleyrand, the anxiety of a Fouché, the bitterness of an Abbé Grégoire, the murmurs of the Army, and the indignation of the Institute! How insignificant they all were! These people, a handful of men enslaved by a theory, could not hide from him the vast mass of the nation who were longing for peace and concord. He had made up his mind! Mgr. Spina, the Papal envoy, had presented himself before him at Vercelli in the Piedmont, and he now summoned him to Paris, determined to have the plenipotentiary of Rome close at hand. Spina arrived in the French capital on the 5th of November, 1800, accompanied by his theological adviser, Caselli. On the very next day Bonaparte gave him a cordial, not to say flattering reception.

He knew that the arrival of the Archbishop in itself constituted a victory, for in Rome the Consular envoy had met with the most lively opposition. Nevertheless, even in the Eternal City there was one man who saw clearly, fortunately no less a personage than the Holy Father himself. This pale frail monk was not a genius like Gregory VII; in 1800 he was regarded, though mistakenly, as

Pius VII's  
Attitude.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

being a man of mediocre intellect and weak will. But he was a saintly priest, with a heart full of loving kindness, and a mind free from guile and illumined by the light of the spirit. The insults to which the Church and particularly the Holy See had been exposed, the crimes committed, the acts of sacrilege and the blasphemy, were all fully known to him, and he was as indignant as anybody ; but what were the most legitimate grievances compared with the prospect of seeing the return of the lost sheep to the fold ? For six long years the Good Shepherd, losing heart, had abandoned his search for it in the wilderness so far removed from Rome. And now how could he refuse to take the hand held out to him in the name of France ? In this simple priest conscience took the place of genius, and single-handed he succeeded in silencing the voice of bitterness and in considering only the tremendous benefit to be gained. The old man did not even see the astounding increase of authority which would be conferred upon the Papacy by the fact that the head of such a State as revolutionary France should have sought the intervention of the successor of St. Peter, or the unprecedented power which, for political ends, the First Consul was in a sense forcing upon him when he begged him, as a preliminary measure, to depose the leaders of the old Gallican Church.

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And, indeed, in the eyes of the First Consul it was imperative before anything else was done to make an entire clearance of the episcopate of the *Ancien Régime*. He himself was going to do away with the constitutional Bishops with a sweep of the hand ; it was incumbent upon Rome, on her side, to sacrifice even those whose sees the latter had "usurped" in 1791, with a view to clearing the way for the installation of chosen representatives of both sides in the new episcopate. But, as Cardinal Martiniana had already been led to suppose would be the case, the Curia, with some justification, opposed the suggestion with indignation. "If you search the whole history of the Church, you will never discover a similar example," wrote Consalvi, the Secretary of State, to Spina. "The sacrifice of a hundred Bishops is utterly out of the question." Spina was accordingly urged to "bring all his

The  
Bishops  
of the  
*Ancien  
Régime*.

## NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONCORDAT

influence" to bear on this point. He was also to do his utmost to ensure that Catholicism should be restored to the rank of the "State religion," the sole condition on which the important and even exorbitant right conferred in the old days on his most Christian Majesty, that of appointing the Bishops of the French dioceses, could be conferred upon the temporary head of a suspect republic. On the question of Church lands, the Archbishop was to be guided by circumstances. His general instructions were to "keep his eyes and ears open, to feel his way and subtly to insinuate." *Ascolti, vegga, esplori and destramente insinui.*

On the day after his arrival in Paris, Spina beheld an extraordinary personage entering his room at the inn. He was a common-looking rough-mannered priest, but his eyes shone with intelligence. It was no other than the erstwhile *curé* of Saint Laud d'Angers, that same

**Spina in Paris.** Abbé Bernier who, after dealing the knock-out blow to the *Blues*, had recently been largely responsible for the pacification of the

**Discussions with Bernier.** West. A priest imbued with the deepest faith, he was at the same time a cunning politician; he was, moreover, eaten up with ambition, and brought to the service of Bonaparte, who had won him over,

the zeal of a neophyte reinforced by the determination of an aspirant to a mitre. In the eyes of Spina the part originally played by this rough priest among the Vendéans, whom Rome had regarded as the little army of Judas Maccabaeus fighting, back to the wall, against the oppressors of the Faith, was ample recommendation. But after having been in Paris for a year, where he had learnt the ins and outs of everything, and was better equipped to decide what Rome should concede, the ex-Vendéan rebel was master of the situation. Once again Bonaparte had been lucky in his choice.

The discussions were opened. It is impossible within the compass of this book to follow in the footsteps of Cardinal Mathieu and Boulay de la Meurthe and enter into any detailed account of these arduous negotiations.

After a few days it became clear to Spina that the old episcopate must be sacrificed, failing which the situation, as Bernier had proved to him beyond any possibility of doubt, would become impossible. Pius VII., on being informed of this, was placed on the horns of a cruel dilemma. Eventually, however, he gave way, and

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

on the 22nd of November the old Bishops were doomed to disappear.

The second problem to be solved was that of the Church lands. Bernier's note on this subject was a prodigy of good sense. "The

**The Church  
Lands.**

lands had passed from the possessors or incum-  
bents into those of the purchasers. The law  
had granted the latter a title and the Govern-  
ment a guarantee. Both the law and the guarantee were essentially  
based on the public faith; any attempt to alter or infringe them  
would mean opening the door to fresh trouble and arousing  
against the Church the discontent and hatred of a portion of the  
French nation." This was perfectly true. And Bonaparte far  
preferred to arrange for ecclesiastical stipends by way of in-  
demnity for the loss of the Church lands. On this point Rome  
gave way more readily than on the others. "His Holiness," read  
article 13, "in the interests of peace and the happy restoration of  
the Catholic religion, hereby declares that the ownership of these  
lands, and the rights and revenues attached thereto, shall remain  
incommutable in their hands and in those of their assigns." And  
thus the colossal transfer of property, which had duplicated  
the political Revolution with a regular social revolution, was  
sanctioned, and the Church lands were for ever and a day secured  
to the purchasers, who were more than satisfied. They now had  
an interest in the signing of the Concordat, and, for a long time to  
come, in its maintenance.

The number of bishoprics was reduced. Seventy towns thus  
lost the title of capital of a diocese, only sixty preserving it.  
Bonaparte insisted that the right of appointing the occupants of  
these State-supported dioceses, which by the ancient Concordat of  
Boulogne had been vested in the King, should remain in the hands  
of the Government. But in return for this privilege, Bernier was  
obliged to grant one of the most ardent desires of Rome, and con-  
sent to the Catholic religion being proclaimed the "State religion"  
—which led to his being shortly obliged to go back on his word.

At the end of November Spina and Bernier had completed their  
task. So great was Bernier's zeal that, mere  
provincial priest though he was, he had drawn up  
with his own hands the brief to which Pius VII  
merely had to put his august signature. Thus,  
everything seemed to have been settled when Talleyrand, who up-

**Agreement  
Apparently  
Reached.**

# NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONCORDAT

to this point had affected to take not the slightest interest, entered upon the scene. . . . Later on, when he was an old man, Prince Talleyrand, in his misleading *Mémoires*, audaciously indulged in a pompous eulogy of the Concordat ; but he took good care not to remind his readers that Citizen Talleyrand-Périgord

**Talleyrand's Intervention.** had done everything in his power to compass its failure at the very moment when it was apparently ready to be signed. As a matter of fact, he was not moved to act by the idea that he would be able to prevent its conclusion, but he wished to introduce a clause in which he had a strong personal interest ; it was a matter of inducing the Pope to admit "to the lay communion," or, in other words, to "restore to secular rank," together with all the consequences that such a favour entailed, all priests who had left the Church and had married or wished to marry—the latter being his own case. This was what Cardinal Mathieu so wittily called "the Mrs. Grant clause." But, needless to say, secretive as usual, the ex-Bishop of Autun, and future husband of Mrs. Grant, did not advance this amendment. On being consulted by the First Consul, he at first lodged the most formal objections on a much more important matter. How was it possible to reconcile with the principle of equal rights for all religions, which was a fundamental doctrine of the Revolution, the existence of a "State religion" ? He easily gained his point, and Bonaparte authorised his Ministers to amend the draft. Whereupon Talleyrand further prevailed upon the First Consul to add another clause which, seemingly perfectly innocent, might have ruined everything. As a matter of fact, in the back of his mind the ex-Bishop was aware that this amendment would have the advantage of clearing him personally of one of the main charges brought against him by the Church, for by it the constitutional Bishops were to be adjured in precisely the same terms as the *émigré* prelates to resign their sees. This was a trap for the Curia ; it would thus be forced indirectly to grant retrospective recognition to the legitimacy of the former and consequently to give quasi-absolution to that Bishop of Autun who, with the exception of two other colleagues, was the only man in 1791 sufficiently daring to consecrate the first "schismatics" to be appointed. The clause appealed to Bonaparte. He felt it was in keeping with a Concordat which he

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

declared should not constitute a victory for either party, but a settlement between them. Furthermore, it might perhaps soothe the ruffled feelings of the Abbé Grégoire, who, at this juncture, had been given permission by the First Consul to come to Malmaison and lay his hostile criticisms before him. Whereupon Talleyrand smuggled in the famous clause on married priests which, just when everything seemed to be settled, had the effect of making the counter-project presented by France a most disagreeable surprise for the Holy See.

It required less than this for the Cardinals of the Curia to be up in arms immediately, and Rome categorically refused to include any of the new clauses. Bernier endeavoured to find acceptable formulæ; Spina would have nothing to do with them. The First Consul became irritated by what he called puerile scruples, and it seemed as though the whole negotiation would fall through.

Furthermore, after Talleyrand, with his usual apparent indifference, had laid his mines, Fouché, on his side, started his sapping operations. He had joined forces with Grégoire and was allowing him to make a last supreme effort to galvanise the constitutional Church back to life. She was at her last gasp, but it was necessary for her to give the impression of

Fouché  
Favours the  
"Constitutionals."

still being a power in the land. The Minister of Police was in favour of the appointment of a commission preparatory to the formation of a "National Council" which Grégoire hoped would defend the menaced "rights" of the "clergy of the Revolution." As a matter of fact, Bonaparte did not look with disfavour on the formation of this Council, which would doubtless cause consternation in Rome. As soon as the blow calculated to strike terror in

Threat of a  
Rupture.

the breasts of the Curia had fallen, the First Consul informed Spina that he would have to sign without further discussion. The latter refused, but said that he was sending a messenger to Rome, though he had but little hope that the Curia would give way. A rupture seemed imminent.

And indeed the deliberations of the Cardinals had ended in the rejection of the new clauses after a debate in which the original draft accepted by Spina had been the subject of the most acrimonious criticism, and Pius VII, deeply moved, had written to

## NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONCORDAT

the First Consul, appealing to him in the most touching terms to give way. But before the Pope's reply reached Paris the unfortunate Spina had had a most terrible scene with Bonaparte. Summoned to Malmaison on the 22nd Floréal (the 12th of May), the Archbishop heard from Bonaparte's own lips that, owing to the obstructiveness of Rome, he was considering other solutions of the problem; he was going to turn Calvinist or recognise the constitutional Church. At the same moment Talleyrand instructed Cacault, the French Minister in Rome, to send in his papers. Cacault took his departure, but before he reached Florence he had an interview with Consalvi which was destined to save the situation.

Cacault, a revolutionary who had quickly learnt the error of his ways, was an extremely clever man, whose shrewd good nature had completely won the heart of the Papal Secretary of State. He had seen into the latter's inmost soul and had correctly summed him up. He succeeded in persuading him to go to Paris himself, and with complete confidence recommended him to his Government, declaring that he was a man endowed with "clarity of vision."

At heart Bonaparte had never seriously meant to break off the negotiations. "I am extremely displeased with the Pope," he observed to Talleyrand. "He is exploiting my conviction that the country must have religion as well as the recalcitrant priests whom alone the people hold in respect. And, indeed, what can

**Consalvi  
in Paris.**

we do with the constitutional rabble if they are not absorbed into the real priesthood?" This was a warning to Talleyrand, the Father of the constitutional Church.

Consalvi arrived on the 20th of June. His behaviour pleased Bonaparte; it was Canossa over again with the parts reversed, the purple-robed Cardinal now bowing low before the purple-robed Consul. When Bonaparte sent the Papal Secretary the summons to present himself at the Tuileries, he added: "Let him come as empurpled as possible." Consalvi was surprised by the courteous reception he received. "As you refused to accept the draft," were the First Consul's parting

**Further  
Negotiations.**

words, "you will be presented with another containing the only changes I can consent to make. You must sign it without fail within five days."

On the following day Consalvi, in his turn, was closeted with Bernier, Spina completing the trio.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

The most important question to be settled was that of the State religion. A note sent by Bernier to Spina cleverly summed up the argument. The institution of a State religion was incompatible with the fundamental principles of the new régime in France, with equal rights for all forms of worship. The Cardinal, an alert and broad-minded man, now that he was actually in Paris, began to understand. "I have discovered," he wrote to the Cardinal Under-Secretary of State, "that there are some things which are quite impossible here and that the reasons I have been given are irrefutable."

He therefore drafted a counter-project of which article 1 ran simply as follows: "The Government of the French Republic, recognising that the Catholic religion is the religion of the vast majority of French citizens and while itself professing it . . ."

But once again Talleyrand put his spoke in the wheel and sent a stiff note. However, he was now well aware that the Concordat was bound to be concluded and that he would not be listened to any longer, and, being a clever man, he pretended he had to "drink the waters" at some spa and left the scene of action. This diplomatic departure cleared the ground. Consalvi paid a second visit to the Consul, who gave him quite as friendly a reception as he had done on the first occasion, but refused to yield on the matter of the profession of the Catholic faith by the Government. "The Constitution is opposed to it," he explained, "and as far as we Consuls are concerned, the Pope must take our Catholicism for granted."

And so, like Penelope's web, the whole of the work had to be done again. Bernier, in the name of the Consul, dazzled the Cardinal's eyes by holding out the most rosy prospects for the restored religion if only Rome would make the desired concessions. The Church was not only to be protected; she was to be exalted. Consalvi gave way and even consented to the idea of subjecting the restored Church to French police regulations. "She shall have freedom of worship," ran the Concordat, "provided that, in view of existing conditions, she conforms to such police regulations as shall be deemed necessary in the interests of public safety." But as Consalvi furthermore promised that the Pope, by means of a special brief, would authorise married priests "to return to secular rank" and to be admitted to "the lay com-

# NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONCORDAT

munion," any revival of the insidious suggestion that a papal letter should be sent to the constitutional Bishops was avoided.

The Concordat now seemed settled and on the 13th of July the *Moniteur* (this was the first official reference to the negotiation) published the following brief announcement : " Cardinal Consalvi has succeeded in the mission to the Government entrusted to him by His Holiness the Pope." However, that very day, the 13th,

**Another  
Hitch.**

when the plenipotentiaries appointed to sign it—Joseph Bonaparte, Cr  tet and Bernier on the one hand, and Consalvi, Spina and Caselli on the other—

met under the roof of the Consul's brother, an extraordinary incident occurred. The Cardinal, on again perusing the text presented to him for his signature, discovered that it did not tally with the one to which he had given his consent—most important of all, the clause on the subject of the secularisation of married priests, with which the Pope had reserved to himself the right to deal by means of a brief, had been smuggled in ! Talleyrand had once more had it inserted—Mrs. Grant again ! Consalvi protested ; a discussion ensued which lasted all through the night and was continued on the morning of the 14th. Bonaparte lost his temper. He insisted on retaining the modified text. Consalvi, distressed beyond measure, refused to sign. He was due to dine that very night, the 14th of July, at the Tuileries. The First Consul received him with bitter reproaches, repeating again and again : " It is you who wish to break off the negotiations." But

**Signature  
of the  
Concordat.**

it was obvious that he refused to admit that they had been broken off. On the 15th, at midday, there was another meeting at Joseph's house.

Further concessions were made on both sides and at eleven o'clock at night an agreement was reached at last, while at two o'clock on the morning of the 16th of July, 1801, the Concordat was signed.

It still remained for it to be ratified in Rome, where it met with the most bitter opposition on the part of some of the Cardinals. But Pius VII was determined to ignore them. Consalvi, on his return from France, had been in a position to describe to him the various difficulties to which he had been exposed. Through him, Pius VII learnt that while his own Sacred College was subjecting the draft to the liveliest criticism, in Paris the Institute, another

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Sacred College, was doing all in its power to discredit it. It had filled that body with fury and indignation sure to be re-echoed in the Assemblies, to which this famous Convention was bound to be submitted before it could become law. In hostile circles, and even in those that were not hostile, there was a general rattling of sabres. "It requires all the energy of character and all the goodwill displayed by the First Consul to resist all this opposition," wrote Consalvi as early as the 16th of July. If the Curia delayed too long over their examination of the Concordat, what an opportunity would they not be giving to its enemies in Paris! Pius VII was anxious to have the matter settled at once. He turned a deaf ear to the violent diatribes of five Cardinals against "the ghost of a religion that was being restored in France," to use Cardinal Antonelli's famous description. But the Pope was able to gauge even better than he had done a year previously the inestimable advantage of the return to the bosom of the Church of twenty-five million Catholics. And what Catholics—those undaunted masses who, after being so sorely tried, surely deserved to have their constancy rewarded by seeing the end of their tribulations!

SOURCES. Works already mentioned by Aulard and Bailien. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VII. Le Coz, *Correspondance*, published by Roussel, II. Remâcle, *Relations des agents de Louis XVIII*. Boulay de la Meurthe, *Documents de la négociation du Concordat*. Fiévée, *Lettres*, I. Pelet, *Opinions*. Talleyrand, *Lettres à Napoléon*. Memoirs and Reminiscences by Molé, Broglie and Talleyrand.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Vandal, Aulard, Sorel, Lanzac de Laborie, Madelin, Holzhausen, Driault, Daudet, Gautier, Masson, Picard, Pingaud (*Bernadotte*), and P. de la Gorce. Masson, *Jadis*, I. Latreille, *L'opposition au Concordat*. Cardinal Mathieu, *Le Concordat*. Séché, *Les origines du Concordat*.

## CHAPTER X

### DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

The Concordat and the Bishops of the *Ancien Régime*; their refusal to resign. The new episcopal body. The Concordat and the parties. Opposition in the Army. Moreau's attitude. The General Staff opposed to the Concordat. Revival of opposition in the Assemblies. Incident in the Tribunate. Wrath of the First Consul. The Concordat exacerbates the opposition of the Assemblies. Bonaparte relies on public opinion to support him. He makes preparations for "purging" the Assemblies. The Lyons *Consulta*. Negotiations at Amiens; treaty of peace with England. The Concordat voted by the Assemblies. The Festival of the Restoration of Religion. The Easter Day celebration of Mass in Notre Dame.

NEVERTHELESS two long months dragged by before the ratification from Rome arrived. It was not presented until Vendémiaire of the year X by Cardinal Caprara, who, in the capacity of Papal Legate, was entrusted with the task of arranging the practical details of the application of the Concordat with Portalis, the Councillor of State, appointed to be Minister of Public Worship. On the 23rd Vendémiaire Bonaparte instructed the latter to hasten matters so that "peace with Europe and peace with the Church might be published on the same day, the 18th Brumaire of the year X, throughout the length and breadth of the Republic."

But in this connection his impatience to have everything settled was doomed to disappointment for two reasons. Peace with the Church could not be proclaimed until the Concordat could be put into practice by the evacuation of the two Bishoprics which it was abolishing; moreover, the Convention signed on the 16th of July also required the vote of the Legislative Body to become law of the land. In the autumn of 1801 it seemed likely that both these operations would present considerable difficulty.

The First Consul had the constitutional Church under his thumb and had no difficulty in getting rid of it. As soon as the Concordat

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

was signed, the dissolution of the constitutional Council, which, during the progress of negotiations, had been sitting in Notre Dame, was ordered by the Government. The Bishops immediately obeyed. For what was the basis of their existence? A purely civil law. And as soon as this law was repealed, they ceased to be anything. They accordingly disappeared without a murmur.

The Bishops of the *Ancien Régime*, the vast majority of whom at this time were *émigrés*, were in a very different position. Even the wise and prudent Abbé Émery, the head of Saint Sulpice and an ardent advocate of the Concordat, was obliged to confess that their case was unique. "It is an extremely violent measure," he wrote, "and there is no precedent for it." As

Opposition of  
the Bishops of  
the *Ancien*  
*Régime*.

a matter of fact, Pius VII, in his brief *Tam multos*, addressed to the Bishops concerned, felt he must appeal to "their evangelical spirit" in asking them to send in their resignations. It was a miracle that out of eighty-two survivors of the old episcopate as many as forty-six obeyed forthwith. The other thirty-six remained obdurate, and Pius VII was obliged to resign himself to committing an unprecedented act in depriving them of their dioceses. "Masterly apostolicide!" exclaimed one of their number. The matter had dragged on for six whole months.

Bonaparte did not wait as long as this before forming the new episcopal body. He was anxious to make this operation a further proof of the principle upon which, in his opinion, the Concordat, like every other measure of the Consular Government, was founded—"the re-union of all parties." Of the sixty Bishops nominated by him, thirty-two were to be new men, but out of the remaining twenty-eight, sixteen having been chosen from among the Bishops of the *Ancien Régime* who had sent in their resignations, twelve ex-constitutionals were to be appointed. Bonaparte was particularly anxious for the latter to be included. "It will prove," he wrote, "that the Concordat does not mean the triumph of any particular party but the re-union of them all."

But he had another reason for wishing these representatives of the "revolutionary" Church to be granted admission into the new

## DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

episcopate. The time had come for the Convention to be debated

The Concordat and the Parties.

in the Tribune and voted in the Legislative Body, and it was imperative to use every possible means to secure in these two Assemblies the support of the ex-revolutionaries, now almost unani-

mously opposed to the measure. As the extreme Royalists were waxing indignant over "the Pope's servility, which is derogatory to the majesty of our religion," the "philosophers" of the Institute rose up in arms. As I have already mentioned, the neo-Catholic movement, and above all the attacks emanating from the quarter of Fontanes, exasperated them beyond measure. The support given by the consular Government to the Catholic renaissance drove all these men into a determined opposition, which, prudently dumb in the presence of Bonaparte, found embittered expression elsewhere. Their organ, *La Décade*, deplored the fact that the successor of that same Pius VI, "whom they had been foolish enough to believe would be the last of the Popes," should have been thus placed on a pinnacle. And the five "classes" of the Institute gave vent to their wrath even in the lecture room. It was outrageous that this young republican General, their colleague in the Science class, should be making preparations to send the Republic "to confession."

Keenly alive to this difference of opinion, the opposition, temporarily reduced to silence after Marengo, now revived in a more virulent form than before. The extremists of the Left, according to the police, were violently calling attention to what they regarded as the reactionary measures of the Government, maintaining that the Concordat was the last straw. They declared that as soon as an opportunity presented itself, "their party would again come to the fore," adding that they placed their faith in the Generals. The disapproval of the latter had become more pronounced and they found support in a certain class of officers.

The conclusion of peace produced, above all in military circles, a crisis of considerable gravity. A large number of officers had

Opposition in the Army.

to be put on half-pay, and this gave rise to a good deal of friction. The victims regarded themselves as having been sacrificed for their republican

opinions. They complained that the Consul enrolled young aristocrats, "drones," in his Guards, and that an attempt was

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

being made to turn old soldiers of the Republic into "Prætorians." They told the grenadiers of the Consular Guard that they would be "given chaplains and taken to confession." They found that reference to the Concordat provided the best means of stirring up the rank and file of the Army, all of whom frankly detested anything to do with "clerics." "The Concordat," wrote one of the old police officials, "did not merely shake France, it gave rise to a serious crisis, which," he added, "had its centre in the High Command."

The High Command consisted of Masséna, Schérer, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, Lecourbe, Brune, Macdonald and, more important still, Bernadotte and, above all, Moreau.

"A cabal of all the abortive Bonapartes," wrote Albert Sorel. As we know, they had been hatching conspiracies for the last year. Bernadotte was the most virulent, but he made a great deal of noise without daring to do much. Nevertheless, Madame de Staël dubbed him "a hero," though his inaction and that of his comrades filled her with indignation. "You have no time to spare," she declared. "To-morrow the tyrant will have 40,000 priests at his beck and call." Failing this Gascony fox, Moreau loomed ever larger in their thoughts. He had returned from Germany covered with glory, but still discontented. He tried to create grievances for himself; his wife had had to dance attendance on Madame Bonaparte; he refused to go to the Tuileries again, "because," as he explained with a sneer, "he was too old and stiff to bend his knee." He sulked, but if any attempt was made to approach him he shut up like an oyster.

Moreau's  
Attitude.

The signature of the Concordat provided the pretext for a further explosion on the part of the High Command. Lo and behold! the tyrant was also the friend of the "clerics," and was going to impose a revival of foolish superstitions on the brave soldiers who had fought to stamp them out. Bonaparte contrived to break up this body—by heaping honours on its members. Macdonald, Brune and Lannes were provided with embassies, Bernadotte was given command of the Army of the West at Rennes, and Gouvion that of the forces being prepared for Spain. They accepted. But Moreau wrapped himself up in his own

Opposition of  
the High  
Command.

## DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

dignity and refused everything, though this did not prevent him from continuing to indulge in bitter criticism of Bonaparte's undertakings, more particularly the Concordat and the favour shown to priests.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this he was perhaps encouraged by Fouché, the only member of the Government whom the discontented General saw. Never-

**Fouché's  
Attitude.**      theless, this Minister had resigned himself to the Concordat. Having examined the matter from every angle, as he had done in the case of the recall of the *émigrés*, he had come to the conclusion that there was something to be said for it. The priests would be kept, but on one condition—that a special police should be organised to superintend public worship. He informed the Consul that “ fanaticism was on the increase,” his object in so doing being to persuade the latter, if only for the sake of making the Convention that had been signed acceptable to the Assemblies, that the addition of stringent Organic Articles in connection with the restored religion was absolutely essential.

The fact was that under the combined influence of the Institute the General Staff, and perhaps also of the Minister of Police himself, opposition against the dreaded and despised Concordat was being organised in the Assemblies. Bonaparte had reached a critical point in his career.

But he was in no way perturbed by this crusade; he had his eyes constantly fixed on the masses, and he saw that they were in the seventh heaven at the mere mention of a definite restoration of religious peace. Nevertheless, according to some observers, certain “ cultured persons ” felt they could approve of the restoration of religious worship only on condition “ that it went no further, but was confined to the churches, and that the power of the Pope was curtailed.” The famous “ Organic Articles ” were in the air. They would win over a certain number of opponents and would constitute a sort of second Concordat concluded, this time, with “ Philosophy.” But, according to one account, not even the organisation of a police, for the supervision of public worship, availed to overcome the hostility of the majority of the Senators, Tribunes and Councillors of State. All this gave the



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

First Consul food for reflection. Clearly he had yet another battle to win—doubtless the last. But he took stock of his adversary and meditated enlarging the scope of the conflict himself in order, once and for all, to put an end to this constantly recurring opposition.

During the last few months it had made itself felt in almost every connection; not a single law, even the most useful, necessary and justifiable, had been passed unanimously. Even the treaties of peace, magnificent though they were, had given rise to objections, criticism and even to bitterness on being presented to the Assemblies. The opponents of the Government were watching for an opportunity for creating a disturbance; and they found it in the treaty with Russia. In the protocol it was declared that the Governments of the two countries guaranteed to their subjects (it was the time-honoured formula) such and such advantages. The word "subjects" was immediately pounced upon with a great show of indignation. "For ten years," exclaimed Marie-Joseph Chénier in tragic tones, "our armies have fought to make us citizens, and now we have become subjects again! Thus has the aim of the Dual Alliance been attained!" This was nothing but a deliberate quibble; obviously it was intended to wreck the whole proceedings. But the Assembly burst out into vociferous applause, and the treaty, instead of being accepted unanimously, was passed by 88 votes to 14. Shortly afterwards an important clause in the magnificent Civil Code, then just on the point of reaching completion, was thrown out in the Tribunal by 65 votes to 13, and by the Legislative Body, duly impressed, by 142 votes to 139.

Bonaparte, who for weeks had experienced considerable difficulty in controlling himself, now let himself go, and at an audience granted to the tribune Girardin he referred to the above incident in connection with the Franco-Russian treaty in terms of the most violent abuse.

"They are curs . . . I meet curs wherever I go; they are constantly putting spokes in the wheel." The Tribunal was doubtless a useful institution and he "would always uphold it to the best of his ability." But to-day, he added, "it is an obstacle which retards the execution of the most salutary designs."

## DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

The question of the Concordat provided the finishing touch ; the Assemblies did not even wait for the convention signed with Rome to be presented to them before opening hostilities. The Legislative Body, now in its third session, had, for purposes openly acknowledged in the lobbies, elected as its President a certain publicist, named Dupuy, whose only claim to comparative celebrity lay in the publication of a frankly hostile book on Religions. Furthermore, there being at this moment a vacancy in the Senate to be filled, the Assembly had presented as their sole candidate—still by way of protest—the constitutional Bishop Grégoire, while the Tribune, in a similar frame of mind, had proposed the ex-Oratorian Daunou, an avowed enemy of Rome. This sinister plot was a complete success ; for, though the Consuls on their side had designated as their candidate a certain General Lamartilière, a man of no political convictions, the Senate, out of all the three applicants, chose Grégoire, “ in the very teeth of the Concordat,” as Roederer remarked.

The First Consul took this as a warning. Obviously a violent campaign was being prepared. The opposition was now leading the Assemblies ; the Concordat, not to mention the Government, was in danger. Bonaparte was expected to make his appearance both in the Palais Bourbon and the Palais Royal ; but he decided to wait ; he knew what he was going to do. “ The raving lunatics imagine I am afraid of them,” he declared, “ because I am not publishing the Concordat. They are mistaken.”

He sounded public opinion ; there was no reaction in favour of the Assemblies ; very far from it ! Even in the public benches in the Palais Royal people were saying that the Tribune were merely trying to handicap the Government and constantly doing all they could to put spokes in the wheel. This was the very expression used by Bonaparte himself.

Strong in the support of public opinion, the First Consul unexpectedly took the offensive. As Clause III of the Code had again been thrown out by the Tribune, he suddenly withdrew all the Bills that had been presented : “ It is with the greatest reluctance,” wrote the semi-official *Messenger*, “ that the Government finds itself obliged to postpone to some future

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occasion the laws awaited with so much interest by the nation. But it is convinced that the time has not yet come when these weighty discussions can be conducted with the requisite calmness and unity of purpose."

But what could be done to break the opposition of the Assemblies? No provision had been made in the Constitution for such an operation. The subtle mind of Cambacérès discovered a means. It was a matter of turning out twenty tribunes and sixty deputies who were hostile to the national policy. Now, according to the Constitution, a fifth of the Assemblies would shortly have to be renewed; constitutionally, the Senate was entrusted with the task of replacing or re-electing the outgoing members; but were the latter to be chosen by lot or by the Senate? Cambacérès decided in favour of the latter interpretation of the law; thus the Upper House, which Cambacérès undertook to instruct, was to decide which members were to retire. The Senate was accordingly charged with this duty; on the advice of the lawyer Tronchet, the Upper House decided not to draw up a list of members to be retired, but of members to be retained or promoted. Only fifteen senators voted against this measure. And thus it came about that prominent adversaries of the Government, like Chénier, Chazal, Daunou, Benjamin Constant, and Ginguené,

were removed. But in order to prevent the operation from appearing like a political manœuvre,

The Assemblies "purged." Carnot was summoned to the Legislative Assembly. Germaine de Staël, infuriated above all by the expulsion of Benjamin Constant, exclaimed that the Assemblies had not been "purged"; they had been "skimmed." The First Consul, on being told of this remark, was not in the least perturbed. All he did was to tell his brothers, who used to visit the "Necker woman," that they had better inform the female that he was not a Louis XVI.

The Tribunate, in addition to being purged, was also reformed. It was divided into sections corresponding to the sections of the Council of State and, according to Thibaudeau, became "a replica" of the latter institution. Thus "this ghost of national representation," as this same ex-conventional describes it, which had been retained by the Constitution, vanished, and the opposition seemed to be broken.

## DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

At last the time seemed to have come to complete the Herculean task presented by the Concordat. But such had been the attitude of a certain section of the public—and it still remained unchanged—that the Consul, on the advice of several of his ministers, thought it prudent to make what appeared to be some concessions to the adversaries of Rome, although, as a matter of fact, the two measures contemplated were fairly to his own liking. Certain Organic Articles, the principle of which, as a matter of fact, had apparently been previously approved by Consalvi, were added to the Concordat; furthermore, in answer to the protest made by the Pope against the inclusion of old constitutional Bishops in the episcopal body, the First Consul made it a *sine qua non* for the practical application of the Concordat that this principle should be accepted. Thus, duly armed against the final recriminations of his opponents, the Consul was able to send the signed Convention to the Legislative Body, where, it was hinted, in spite of the purgation, attempts were again being made to form an opposition.

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Was it because he wished to stifle all opposition beneath the weight of a popularity that had developed into paroxysmal enthusiasm that the Consul postponed the presentation of the Bill for yet another three months? In any case, there can be no doubt that his aim was to place before the Assemblies, at the same time as the Concordat, a definite treaty of peace with England—a general peace, in fact.

As a matter of fact, the British Government would have liked to prolong the discussion of the peace preliminaries in London for some considerable time. But the idea did not appeal to Bonaparte, and in order to force the English at long last to sign,

Bonaparte's  
Plans for  
Portugal  
and Italy.

he tried to arouse their fears by again facing them with *faits accomplis*. Accordingly, in conjunction with Spain, he made preparations for the occupation of the whole of Portugal, which, in the event

of the war being continued, would snatch this little State away from the virtual protection of England. At the same time he also definitely consolidated his power in the north of Italy. The Cisalpine Republic was to be turned into a State

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

modelled on the pattern of the French consular system; the Cisalpine deputies were to meet at Lyons in a solemn *Consulta* for the purpose of adopting the new Constitution and choosing a head for the reformed Republic. The First Consul's original intention had been not to insist upon his own election to this office but to secure the appointment of his brother Joseph. But the latter, although he was aching to be a ruler, raised objections, as he always did, and imposed conditions, with the result that Bonaparte forthwith decided to be President of the new Republic himself.

On the 11th of January he appeared before the *Consulta*. That Assembly was by no means unanimous regarding the choice of a man who inspired considerable hostility even in the breasts of some of the deputies. But he was of Italian blood, a fact which he took care not to forget on that day. In their own language, which he knew well, he laid before the representatives of the newly "liberated" Italian province a magnificent programme of reconstruction; whereupon he suddenly pronounced the word for which none of them had dared to hope, the word which was on the lips of all these patriots, but which he alone could utter. It was high time, he declared, that the Cisalpine changed its name and proudly proclaimed itself the "Italian Republic." At these words, so big with promise for the race and the nation, there was a wild outburst of enthusiasm, and with one voice the deputies acclaimed as President of the new Italian "State" the man who, a short while back, after Lodi and Marengo, had by his victories founded and restored it.

Thus Bonaparte's Government was to be set up in Milan and, with Spain already closely bound to France, the fate of Italy, occupied by French troops from Turin to Tarentum, was to become every day more intimately connected with that of the French *Imperator*.

These events filled England with alarm, but also forced her to move.

On the 3rd of December, 1801, the peace conference had been transferred to Amiens, where negotiations dragged on for seven weeks. The main problem was that of Malta, which England was no longer willing to relinquish, even to hand it over to the inoffensive rule of the Knights of the Order of St. John. But Bonaparte refused to

Negotiations  
at Amiens.

## DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

evacuate Tarentum until Malta was handed back to the latter. The British Government, however, was possessed by the idea that Malta, having fallen into the hands of the English, should not be allowed to leave them, and it concentrated all its efforts on this point. As had been the case during the preliminary negotiations in London, it did not dare to say a word about Belgium and Holland. True, a clause of the Treaty of Lunéville had raised the subject of the evacuation of Holland, but it would have been imprudent to place any reliance on this. For, when once peace had been concluded, Bonaparte could, with some show of justice, have replied to England's demands by the retort that there had never been any mention of Holland at Amiens and that it was a matter which concerned only himself and the other European Governments.

As a matter of fact, the City magnates were urging the Government to reach a settlement. They were still hoping that the restoration of peace would lead to an advantageous commercial treaty. "The French," one of them observed, "are a great help to our manufacturers." But Bonaparte refused to make any promises in this connection. The English Ministers, disappointed, threatened to break off negotiations. The First Consul appeared in no way perturbed. But on being pressed to proclaim peace, he consented to allow England to remain in Malta for six months, on the understanding that after this period she should evacuate the island at the same time as the French evacuated Tarentum. But still London did not seem to be satisfied. Whereupon the Consul brought every influence to bear. He informed the plenipotentiaries who were negotiating at Amiens that the Powers approved of the alterations made on the Continent, and at last England resigned herself to coming to terms. She gave a formal undertaking to evacuate Malta within six months, and on the 4th Germinal (the 25th of March, 1802) the signatures were exchanged. General peace was restored and the saviour of France placed the seal on his great work in the style of the period by closing the Temple of Janus, which, to the sorrow of mankind, had been open for ten long years.

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## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

A prolonged cry of joy arose throughout the length and breadth of France, and was re-echoed by the whole of Europe, restored for one brief moment to peace. The " transports of enthusiasm " reported by the police, " particularly in the suburbs," of Paris, spread through the country, increasing in volume as they went. The opponents of the Government were filled with consternation ; in fact, so strong was party spirit in some of them that, confronted by the conclusion of general peace, they confessed to a feeling of rage and fury.

These people were perfectly right in the conclusions they had drawn. This additional triumph was perhaps necessary if the Concordat was not to be exposed to the risk of defeat even in the " purged " Assemblies.

The Bill, including the Concordat and the Organic Articles, was passed, as a matter of fact, with only seven dissentient voices, in the Tribune. But in the Legislative Body, which at this juncture had merely been " renewed," only 228 out of 300 members voted in favour of it, 21 voting against and 51 abstaining out of consideration for the Consul, or possibly out of fear. Be this as it may, on the 25th Germinal of the year X (the 15th of April, 1802) the Concordat became law.

So confidently had this result been foreseen that a week previously the 28th Germinal (Easter Day) had been fixed for the Festival of the Restoration of Religious Worship.

**Festival of the Restoration of Religion.** On the 27th the *Moniteur* published a fine proclamation issued by Bonaparte on this subject. It was a magnificent number, unique in history, for in this short but eloquent edict appearing above a signature that acted like a charm the First Consul informed the country that the Concordat had been passed—peace from religious conflict—and the Treaty of Amiens ratified—peace from armed conflict—while on the following page there appeared an enthusiastic article by Fontanes on a book that had just been published, the *Génie du Christianisme*, by the Vicomte de Chateaubriand. Such was the prelude to Easter Day, 1802, the Feast of the Resurrection.

## DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

The programme merely arranged for a ceremony in Notre Dame, attended by the Government, the constituent bodies, the heads of the Army and the representatives of foreign countries. It was to take the form of a solemn Mass followed by a *Te Deum*.

In the morning Paris was awakened by a call which made her rub her eyes—the great bell of Notre Dame and of a hundred other churches, all of which had been silent for ten years, rang out full peal. The people, even those who were not followers of the restored religion, were stirred to the depths. “The great bell!” exclaimed a workman of the Île Saint Louis. “I’d rather hear that than the call to arms.” At the same moment the bells of forty thousand churches began to peal throughout the length and breadth of France, ringing in the Resurrection. The guns also joined in the chorus when at eleven o’clock the Consuls left the Tuileries for Notre Dame.

Surrounded by a vast throng which besieged the ancient church of the metropolis, thirty Bishops, together with Cardinal Caprara, the Papal Legate, had already arrived, clad in full canonicals, and taken up their stand in the portico awaiting the arrival of the heads of the Republican Government.

The latter were making their way towards Notre Dame with a display of pomp and ceremony altogether new. The streets were lined with soldiers presenting arms, and surrounded by an escort of prancing cavalry, the Consuls sat in a carriage drawn by eight horses led by Mamelukes of the Guard walking on foot. But one figure alone in this carriage was the cynosure of all eyes—Bonaparte. He seemed to be entirely at his ease, and showed no signs of stiffness or embarrassment in the midst of this renewal of regal splendour. His face was illumined by an expression of serene satisfaction, and when he alighted in front of the church and was received by old Archbishop Belloy, a nonagenarian born in the reign of Louis XIV, it was with unaffected dignity that he received the holy water from the hands of this patriarch. “Never had he seemed so great!” wrote one eye-witness.

When the Great Man entered the whole congregation rose to their feet with a tremendous clatter. As a matter of fact, for the last two hours, indescribable confusion had reigned inside the building. This was partially due to the somewhat scandalous



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behaviour of some general officers whom Berthier had almost forced to attend and who had insisted upon being compensated for their presence at this "mummery" by behaving with the greatest insolence. They had even turned the priests out of their seats *manu militari* and taken their places, and had been guilty of the most irreverent behaviour during the interval before the arrival of the Government. As soon as the procession made its appearance there was a sudden noisy stir of curiosity barely covered by the two orchestras conducted by Méhul and Cherubini—Monsieur Chérubin, as the newspapers called him. It was only a military band—the latest fashion—placed in the choir that succeeded in drowning the tumult when, in due course, the salute of its brazen-throated instruments trumpeted forth the arrival of the Consuls.

After the Gospel the recently appointed Bishops took the oath at the hands of the First Consul. The sermon was preached by Boisgelin, Archbishop of Tours; in 1774, as Archbishop of Aix, he had performed a similar function at the coronation of Louis XVI, a fact which put the finishing touch to the present extraordinary scene. At the elevation of the Host the drums beat a salute and the soldiers presented arms. After Mass Caprara, the Papal Legate, intoned the *Te Deum* in the midst of a din and uproar which had again become deafening.

After a ceremony lasting three hours the Consuls returned to the Tuileries cheered to the echo by "huge crowds delirious with joy." But in the evening, when the First Consul asked General Delmas what he thought of Notre Dame, the latter replied ungraciously, "A fine piece of mummery! We only wanted the hundred thousand men who allowed themselves to be killed to put a stop to all that!" The rough soldier was proud of this reply, worthy of a "spartiate of the Rhine."

Happily it was for something very different that these hundred thousand had "allowed themselves to be killed." Was it not their own parents and brothers who, on that day, gave their joy and enthusiasm full rein? Witnesses who are above suspicion, such as the strict Protestant, Helmina de Chézy, bowed their heads before the obvious happiness of the people who, as she said, "having recovered their God and their churches, blessed the hand that had restored peace to France and succeeded in reconciling her

## DISPUTES OVER THE CONCORDAT

with the Almighty." Germaine de Staël, of course, described it as an "odious spectacle," but the people sang the following lines, the style of which was clearly very different to Madame de Staël's:

" Nous supprimons le décadi<sup>1</sup>  
Avec sa kyrielle en i ;  
Le dimanche on fetera,  
Alleluia ! "

SOURCES. Works already mentioned by Aulard and Bailleu. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VII. Girardin, *Journal*, I, II. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Thibaudeau and Pasquier.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Sorel, Latreille, Masson (*Famille*, II, and *Jadis*, II), Gautier, Driault, Lanzac de Laborie, Holzhausen, La Gorce, and Cardinal Mathieu. Gilbert A. Thierry, *Conspirateurs et gens de police*. Lavaquery, *Le Cardinal de Boisgelin*.

<sup>1</sup> "We have suppressed the decadi, with its litany in i; we shall keep Sunday as our festival; Alleluia !"

## CHAPTER XI

### NEARING THE CONSULATE FOR LIFE

Amnesty for the *émigrés*. The Consul wishes to consolidate the new order of society; the "blocks of granite." Public education. The Legion of Honour. The Code. Economics; measures to encourage industry. Foreigners in Paris. Triumph of the consular policy. Bonaparte becomes the idol of the country. Desire to make him Consul for life. He awaits the verdict of the country. Reliance placed in the Senate. Fouché's intrigues in the Senate to wreck the idea of the Consulate for life. The sessions of the Tribunate and the Senate; the latter offers to make Bonaparte Consul for ten years only. Bonaparte appeals to the people. The Council of State prepares for a conference. The choice of a successor; the Bonaparte family endeavours to force the First Consul's hand. The plebiscite of the year X. The Rennes conspiracy. The Constitution of the year X. Consul for life. Augustus Cæsar.

LIKE a General who, certain of victory, strikes blow after blow with lightning speed, Bonaparte now hastened on his reconstructive measures. The step which, next to the Concordat, was likely to prove most incompatible with the ideas and declarations of the great revolutionaries was the amnesty to be granted to the *émigrés*, their recall *en masse*. But these revolutionaries, who were becoming every day more wedded to the new system, had already grown accustomed to bowing before Bonaparte's every wish; moreover, they acknowledged his wisdom, of which the results attained by the consular Government were constantly providing fresh proofs. Fouché, in whom the opposition had placed their trust, was not raising any further objections to an even more comprehensive measure than the one to the principle of which he had agreed a year previously. Furthermore, the measure was not to be represented as an act of reparation, but as a somewhat contemptuous display of clemency; it was to take the form of an amnesty—implying forgiveness for some grave misdemeanour—and by the insertion of a formal clause in the Act would once and for all set at rest the fears of the new owners

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

of property. Nevertheless, in order to avoid asking too much of the Assemblies, although they had been "purged," the measure was not to be presented to them in the form of a Bill, but was to be a *senatus consultum*, whereby the Senate, consisting of the most distinguished spirits of the Revolution, would take under the ægis of its authority an amnesty granted to those whom its members had so often declared "Paris had disgorged for ever." On the 9th Floréal the Senate, without debate, passed the measure which healed what Bonaparte had called "one of the sores of the Republic."

The whole world of *émigrés* was extraordinarily perturbed. They swore not to avail themselves of this "humiliating" amnesty, but it was an oath destined to be broken within twenty-four hours. "Nearly all of them swore that it would be dishonourable to accept such an amnesty," wrote shortly afterwards a Frenchman at that time in London, "but while the words were still on their lips they were making preparations to leave; those who had set out on the previous day were bitterly reproached by those who were going to follow them on the next." As a matter of fact, according to the report of one of them who had just come back, they rushed to the frontiers "mad with joy."

The old aristocracy were reappearing once again, and as a result the old order of society seemed in a fair way to being restored. There was good reason to fear that 100,000 Frenchmen returning by relays, but still hostile to the new régime, the new order of society and the new France, would constitute a formidable access of strength to countless opponents of the Revolution, who had remained in the country. But the untiring vigilance of the First Consul had already thought out measures

### Bonaparte's Plans for Reconstruction.

calculated to protect this new France against any fresh outbreak of reaction. He was struck by the almost complete lack of unity presented by the strange society born of the Revolution. "Grains of sand . . . We are scattered, we have no system, no unity, no contact with each other. As long as I am here I can answer for the Republic, but we must think of the future," he declared in the Council of State. "Do you imagine that the Republic is definitely established?" He meant the modern system. "You

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

are sadly mistaken. We have the power to establish it, but we have not yet done so, and we shall never succeed unless we hurl a few blocks of granite on to French soil."

At the very time he made this speech he had in preparation two Bills to be presented in due course to the Assemblies—one for the reorganisation of public education and one for founding the Legion of Honour, both of them inspired by the idea of "blocks of granite."

It was imperative to arrange a new system of education which, subjected to strong intellectual, moral and civic discipline, would, in the near future, produce a coherent society Education. inspired by the new ideas. I have described elsewhere what the First Consul's plans were in this connection, and how, during the interval before the *Université de France* could be founded, he organised the new body of teachers and drew up the programme of studies.<sup>1</sup> This new organisation was the subject of the Bill which, after having been debated in the Council of State and the Tribunate, was passed on the 11th Floréal, this time unanimously, by the Legislative Body. A few days later the First Consul congratulated the Assemblies on having bestowed their approval on a law in which "the Government had endeavoured to unite the advantages of the old discipline with the improvements which the growth of knowledge made appear possible." He hoped that in the course of ten or fifteen years they would see the new society becoming permeated by a generation which, wholly imbued with the spirit of the system born in 1789, would plant it firmly on the famous "blocks of granite."

But it would take twenty years for these schoolchildren of the year X to reach manhood. Was this new world, bereft of all framework, ties and hierarchy, to be left to itself all that time? The First Consul, while hard at work framing the preliminary statutes for public education, was also planning and arranging the practical application of his idea of organising a sort of democratic-aristocracy which, consisting of the best servants of the country and founded—as long ago the nobility of the *Ancien Régime* had been founded—on services rendered, would, he hoped, make the aristocracy destroyed by the Revolution sink into

<sup>1</sup>Louis Madelin. *La France de l'Empire: "La Société,"* pp. 127-131.

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

oblivion. "Only that which can be replaced should be suppressed," he frequently remarked. This General Staff of the nation, these 30,000 picked citizens formed into a "legion," constantly recruited with fresh blood, would be bound by oath to support the principles of the new *régime*. Like every other form of society, it would be given an ideal, and that ideal would be *honour*. It would constitute, at the head of the nation, the *Legion of Honour*. Membership of this legion would be the reward of *virtue*, both civil and military.

It is extremely difficult for us to imagine the unprecedented turmoil to which this Bill gave rise when it was first presented to the Council of State. "It is impossible to-day," wrote a contemporary thirty years later, "to form any adequate idea of it." As we know, of all the principles of 1789, the country had remained attached to one only, the principle of Equality, but it clung to it jealously, even mistrustfully. And it was on this idea of Equality that the opposition, which had temporarily raised its head again, took up its stand. The creation of honorary distinctions, the existence of a hierarchy through the establishment of this new "Order," would pave the way, they declared, to the restoration of an aristocratic caste. And in the Assemblies a movement to throw out the Bill was inaugurated.

Even the Council of State was opposed to it, and declared it to be a measure of urgent necessity by only a very small majority. What would be its fate in the Tribune? To make matters worse, when the debate in the Palais Royal took place, unfortunate tactics were employed. Lucien Bonaparte, who had been summoned to the Tribune after the "purgation," was not at all popular there, and in his speech in support of the Bill he used trenchant, not to say almost offensive arguments. When it was put to the vote the Bill received only 56 votes in favour of it as compared with 38 against, a huge minority when one remembers that all the elements hostile to the Consul's policy had been removed only a short while previously. In the Legislative Body the law was passed, on the 30th Floréal, by only 166 votes to 110.

Be this as it may, the idea, in spite of all its detractors, had triumphed in the end. The new order of society, whilst awaiting the results of the Public Education Act, was to find solid support

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

in the Legion of Honour. A new block of granite was helping to consolidate the shifting sands of revolutionary France, which had now developed into consular France.

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Thus, in the space of a few weeks, the First Consul had succeeded in putting into force all the great measures which he deemed necessary for the completion of the work of pacification in the present and for the provision of a new aristocracy in the future. The Concordat had become law on the 25th Germinal, the Amnesty had been sanctioned by the *senatus consultum* of the 26th Germinal, the Bill for the reorganisation of Public Education had been passed on the 11th Floréal, the Legion of Honour had been instituted by the law of the 30th Floréal, while the Treaty of Amiens, ratified on the 30th Germinal by the unanimous vote of the Assemblies,

had established general peace. Meanwhile various other benefits were being announced. The Codes

were being compiled; the Civil Code, seventy-five per cent of whose clauses had already been passed, was drawing near to completion, thanks to the unremitting labours of five eminent lawyers in the Council of State and the part which, as we know, the First Consul had played in the construction of this splendid legal monument. As a matter of fact, this soldier, although his attention was constantly being diverted by a thousand and one demands and pressing preoccupations, had insisted on being present, as far as possible, at the discussions on the Code. He had presided over 57 out of the 109 sessions devoted to debating it; he knew how to listen as well as how to elicit information from the experts, and in the absence of acquired knowledge he brought his own good sense and penetration to bear, his love of the definite and concrete, his desire to reconcile past and present and that intelligent eclecticism which he wished to characterise the new Code also. Thus he had stamped it with his own spirit. I have enumerated elsewhere the points on which he had more especially stood out even against the great lawyer of the Revolution, Cambacérès, who, next to himself, had played the most important part in this great work.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the Criminal Code, the Commercial Code, the Rural Code and the Code of Civil

<sup>1</sup>Louis Madelin. *La France de l'Empire: "La Société,"* pp. 123-125.

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

Procedure were in course of preparation, the most important and salutary clauses of the Civil Code were already being applied. The new tribunals, henceforward exercising their full powers, were now "interpreting" the "new law," that other block of granite on which the new order of society was being founded.

Furthermore, material as well as moral order was being everywhere introduced. The roads, so badly broken up in the year

**Public Works.** VIII that, as one witness wrote, "it was difficult to make a journey in France," were being re-made to the great satisfaction of all. The public works, too, were all busy again and before long their scope was to be widely enlarged both in Paris and on the most distant frontiers. I shall come back to this later on. ✓

All the industrial concerns were working full time. Soon the inevitable disbanding of some of the armies, as a result of the establishment of peace, would, the Minister of the Interior informed the Prefects, assure to the manufacturers as well as to the Public Works Department, a plentiful supply of labour, for "the arms that had won so many battles could now dig canals and make the factories hum with activity." Whereupon, without waiting for further developments, Chaptal, the Minister of the

**The First  
Exhibition.**

Interior, organised the first Exhibition of Commerce and Industry in the squares round the Louvre. Bonaparte, who visited it, as he alone knew how to visit, showed such an eager curiosity in all he saw that everybody felt that for the time being he was interested only in economics. Under his imperious impulse production became almost febrile in the spring of 1802. "The moment an artisan was in a position to work," we read in one account, "he immediately found a job."

Trade, especially in Paris, after a short period of almost distressing uncertainty following on the preliminary peace negotiations in London, was now also inundated with orders owing to

**Foreigners  
in Paris.**

the influx of foreigners who, with the termination of hostilities, were flocking to visit France—16,000 English in six months! The trade in luxury articles more especially could not cope with the demand. "Most of the workers in these various callings were obliged to work part of the night, so great was the rush," wrote one correspondent.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

But their earnings were commensurate with their labours.

"A year of triumph!" says Albert Sorel of the year 1802. Talleyrand, as a rule but little inclined to enthusiasm, had written as early as Frimaire, "Our tenth year (the year X) has begun well." The year which had "begun well," by the time April came had blossomed into full magnificence, and set the coping-stone to the two and a half years of the Consulate which the Duc de Broglie, who under the July Monarchy became a distinguished Minister, described in his *Souvenirs* as "the best and noblest page in the annals of France." Everybody, from the industrial workers to the merchants, and from the tillers of the soil to the artisans, gave to one man alone the credit for all this. A certain journalist, who remembered his classics, compared the period to the time when Augustus, having established the *pax Romana*, brought prosperity to his Empire, and applied to the new Augustus the line from the *Bucolics*:

*O Melibæe, deus nobis hæc otia fecit.*

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And indeed France, like Virgil of old paying homage to Augustus, the hero of the *pax Romana*, would gladly have saluted as a god "the hero of the *pax Gallicana*."

The parties were confounded, the Assemblies reduced to subjection; the Royalists, discouraged, began to rally round the Government. True, a few of them still cherished the illusion that in Bonaparte, who had so providentially made his appearance, they were supporting what Joubert termed an "inter-rex"; others, even though hostile, bowed down before him. "If Bonaparte were to be overthrown," wrote one noble lady, "we should have a rule of Jacobins." And those who did not love him preferred him to any other alternative. Even the aged Necker now took his daughter to task; he regarded her acrimonious attitude as absurd, and wrote telling her that both the man himself and his dictatorship were "necessary." The "Philosophers" resigned themselves to the inevitable, and shutting themselves up in their Institute, consoled themselves for the Concordat by holding plenary academic sessions, at which they

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

one and all solemnly declared that there was no God—Cabanis had “sworn” to this—and making savage attacks on the *Génie du Christianisme*, their great stumbling-block. Contrary to the charge brought against him, Bonaparte never used the slightest pressure to make them “go to confession.” But the Catholics, who, as soon as the Concordat was put into practice, were given ever fresh proofs of the goodwill and munificence of the man in power, extolled the Consul to the skies; the Bishops, in their charges, and the priests in their sermons, referring to him as the “new Titus,” the “new Zerrubabel,” the “new Constantine.”

Foreigners joined equally vociferously in the chorus of praise. Their stupefaction on being confronted by a France so miraculously risen from the ashes constituted the highest possible tribute. Everybody wished to see “the greatest man in the world,” as the German Sierstorf described him. The police even had to threaten the arrest of some Danes who were said to have genuflected to him in public. Beethoven, who was never destined to set eyes on him, dedicated his *Symphonie héroïque* to him, and his most stubborn foe, the Queen of Naples, did not hide the fact that her admiration was as great as her hatred. When she was told that her son-in-law, the Emperor Francis, had declared that if Bonaparte asked him for the hand of his daughter he would give it to him, she signified her approval of this fantastic suggestion.

And what of the French? Never had a man been so popular as was the young Consul in the spring of 1802, and probably nobody will ever be so popular again.

**Bonaparte's  
Popularity.**

“He has inspired confidence,” wrote Madame de Rémusat.

He had even “inspired” love. On the 16th of May the Abbé Bernier wrote to him from La Vendée, once the department most hostile to the new spirit, “This district belongs to you!” and soon afterwards by an almost unanimous vote it justified this assertion. “If he forces England to make peace at sea, he will become the idol of the country,” the Prussian Minister had written six months previously. By the conclusion of this peace and countless other achievements, he had, indeed, become “the idol of the country.” Shortly afterwards, on one of the fête-days, a transparent sign bearing the following inscription appeared in a window:

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

"In the olden days altars would have been raised to his name."

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But the god was a man, that is to say he was mortal, and love, like all true love, was filled with anxiety. The people trembled to think they might lose him. Roederer, indeed, gives a good description of the general state of mind. "The enterprises we have undertaken, the capital we are risking, this house we are building, these trees we are planting, what would happen to them all if *he* were to be taken?" They felt that to strengthen his position he must be raised even higher, animated by the simple-minded belief that the loftier his position the less exposed would he be to disaster.

In fact once again the time had come when Saint Evremond's astonishing assertion was to be proved true. "The Frenchman," declared that great writer, "is above all jealous of his right to choose his own master."

Cæsarism, ever latent in the heart of the French people, has always sprung from the loins of anarchy; but never had a more magnificent restoration arisen out of a more deadly

**Cæsarism.** type of anarchy, the reason being that a Man had appeared and had saved everything at the very moment when *a crowd* was on the point of destroying it. It was impossible not to be struck by the fact. One man alone, this man, could govern France. But if he were not secured in an even more portentous position of power for life, he might yet fall a victim to some successful intrigue, some well-planned conspiracy. And already certain people, regarding a dictatorship for life as too flimsy a reward, were talking of a hereditary title, of making him "King" or, preferably,—the word appeared as early as the spring of 1802—"Emperor of all the Gauls."

But Bonaparte himself appeared not to notice this movement on the part of the nation.

Undeniably ambitious, nay, quivering with ambition, he had for years been playing a stupendous game which he was now obviously on the point of winning. But, incomparable gambler that he was, he was determined that no movement on his part should betray his impatience in sight of the coveted goal—the

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

attainment of supreme power. He was revelling, voluptuously revelling, in his own popularity; he knew that it would enable him to take everything, but he was determined not to lay hands on anything that was not offered to him. "This period and the time that followed," he confessed to Caulaincourt in 1812, "were the happiest of my life." This happiness did not alienate him from the people, it did not hamper either his vision or his hand. There was no sign of his head being turned by success; he still exercised constant supervision over everything he did and took infinite precautions. Cries of gratitude rose to him from all the councils of the nation; he received them with gracious serenity. "The French people have already done so much for me!" he declared; but to the suggestion that wider and more lasting power should be conferred upon him he turned a deaf ear. What was he thinking? What did he want? What did he expect? Nobody could tell, not even his usual confidants. Had he confessed his inmost thoughts, he would have said that the country ought to know what it wished to offer him. Bonaparte was waiting for France.

But France, to become articulate, required an organ. And in the Consul's opinion this organ was undoubtedly the Senate.

**The Senate.** In the Assembly the large majority were already entirely subjugated. But there were still certain senators who hated the idea of any further increase in the powers of the First Consul. In close touch with these Senators were the members of the High Command, already mentioned, whose jealousy of the good fortune of their comrade-in-arms increased every day; for compared with him they were sinking into ever greater insignificance. At Rennes Bernadotte was champing his bit, and his staff was a hot-bed of disaffection ready to burst out into dangerous conspiracies. This native of Béarn came to Paris declaring that if the "little whipper-snapper" made himself "King," the people could rely on at least one army—his army—rising up in rebellion. The hostile senators made this known, and some of their colleagues, though more favourably disposed towards the First Consul, eagerly seized upon it in justification of their fears. In the interests of Bonaparte himself it would be better, they argued, to avoid raising him too high. But, worse still, Fouché too now lent himself to their designs.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

The Minister of Police was still extremely hostile to any measure that appeared to be reactionary, and the transformation of the republican Consulate into a dictatorship seemed to him eminently calculated to precipitate the reaction he dreaded. Furthermore, he was in the confidence of Josephine, who, as we know, was frankly opposed to *any increase of power, and above all to the bestowal of a hereditary title*, which might lead Bonaparte to consider a divorce. Also she was still a royalist at heart, and regarded the proposed change as an act of usurpation, which would have the further effect of fomenting plots and conspiracies among those who disliked it; in fact, her husband's life would be in danger. All these reasons combined to make her the first to implore Fouché to foil what she called "an intrigue on the part of her brother-in-law Lucien and the rest of the Bonapartes." She assured him that the Consul himself was opposed to the idea. Fouché did not believe a word of all this; he was even of opinion, on taking everything into consideration, that an extension of the Consul's powers was inevitable. All he wished to do was to circumscribe "the evil" and keep the process under control.

He conducted his intrigue with his usual astonishing sureness of touch, while Cambacérès, entrusted with the task of provoking a demonstration on the part of the Senate, but in his heart of hearts somewhat uncertain regarding Bonaparte's real aims, displayed but little energy. As a matter of fact, the Second Consul intended to rely on the Assembly, which Fouché was meanwhile working up. According to Cambacérès the Senate would never take the initiative; it was necessary for the Upper House to be called upon to express its opinion. The Tribune might invite it to do so, and Chabot de l'Allier, the President, who was a personal friend of Cambacérès, was entrusted with the task of playing the leading part. When, on the 16th

Sessions of  
the Tribune  
and the  
Senate.

Floréal (the 6th of May, 1802), the Councillors of State laid the Treaty of Amiens before the Tribune, Chabot, leaving his seat and mounting the rostrum, made an impassioned speech and then

submitted the following motion to the vote of his House: "The Senate is invited to give the Consuls a proof of the nation's gratitude." The motion was carried and forthwith communicated

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

to the Luxembourg, but it was further decided to send a deputation of tribunes to the Consuls in the hope that Bonaparte might reveal his intentions. But he did nothing of the kind. On the 17th he received the delegation, but confined himself to vague generalisations. "He desired no reward beyond the gratitude of his fellow-citizens. Death itself would lose its sting if with his dying eyes he could see the happiness of the Republic as irrevocably assured as its glory." So great did the uncertainty remain that in the Senate there were some who, in all sincerity, maintained that nothing more was required than the voting of a statue in honour of Bonaparte! Fouché, declaring that he had received the information from the Consul's immediate circle, circulated the rumour that in any case all Bonaparte desired was a substantial prolongation of his term of office—ten years, for instance, which added to the seven still remaining to him of his original tenure, would secure him a long reign. Many a crowned head would have been satisfied with as much!

On the 18th Floréal the debate was skilfully transferred to the Senate by the secret opponents of Bonaparte. In the end a mere prolongation of ten years was voted, and it was decided to announce the news to the First Consul by means of a deputation. Bonaparte, who had already been informed, was disgusted. The vote was ridiculous, the outcome of a perfidious manœuvre by which a few idiots had been hoodwinked. He would refuse to accept. But Cambacérès suggested a more skilful rejoinder; the First Consul was to reply by saying that he would accept an extension of his term of office only after the matter had been referred to the people, and the Council of State would thereupon be called upon to formulate the questions to be submitted to the country. And, as a matter of fact, this was the actual reply made by the First Consul to the deputation from the Senate. He even had the extreme audacity to insinuate that he had intended to make the establishment of general peace "the end of his public career," but, since the members of the Senate had begged him in the interests of the State to prolong it and to sacrifice his well-earned rest, "he would consent, provided the wish of the people commanded him to do what the vote of the Senate had authorised."

This weighty matter was then laid before the Council of State;

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

but here too an intrigue, of a different nature, was being hatched, a family intrigue, the instrument of which was Roederer, Joseph's great friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was taken for granted that the Council had made up its mind to suggest that the people should make Bonaparte Consul for life, but this did not by any means satisfy the inordinate ambitions of his family, who were determined that their illustrious brother should be given the further right of appointing his successor. Once in possession of this unprecedented prerogative, Napoleon, whose family loyalty they knew only too well, would be faced with but two alternatives; either he would have to appoint one of his brothers, or, if he meant to hand on his powers to a direct heir, he would have to seek the hope of offspring in a second marriage, which would mean the expulsion of the detested Beauharnais crew. In any case, the Bonaparte family were determined to enthrone themselves behind their Great Man.

These people constituted the most inconvenient, not to say dangerous, group that could possibly surround a man on the point of gaining his ambition. They were destined to play too prominent a part in the history of the next fifteen years for us not to linger a moment over the period when they first showed their hand.

Though they were not all alike, they nevertheless possessed the common characteristic of believing that, because they were Bonapartes, they were far superior to anybody else and could do anything and succeed in anything. They were certainly superior to others in the fierce strength of their passions, not

Joseph. excepting the dull and stupid Joseph, whom shortsighted folk took to be a philosopher, and the purblind mistook for a modest and retiring individual. The eldest of the family—and of a Corsican family to boot!—he had remained almost comically eclipsed by the dazzling pre-eminence of his junior. And oddly enough—a fact which shows the honour paid to seniority by a Corsican born under the *Ancien Régime*—Napoleon was almost as embarrassed by Joseph's "humiliating" position as was the latter himself. In his heart of hearts, between

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Marengo and Wagram, Joseph, who professed and was reputed to be a man of "simple tastes," was consumed by but one ambition, and that was to succeed to the highest office on the death of his brother, who, though younger than himself, was more exposed and therefore more likely to go first. He had formed a party to support him among the "ideologues" whom Napoleon detested, for although he thirsted for power, he posed as a Liberal, and in the presence of his intimates deplored "despotic excesses." He surrounded himself with "philosophers," flirted with Madame de Staël, and coquetted with the most overt of the malcontents, all of whom were only too pleased to use him as a pawn against his illustrious brother.

There was more justification for Lucien's lofty aspirations, for on the 19th Brumaire he had at least rendered Napoleon a valuable service in helping him to force his fate. He was intelligent and enterprising, reckless and madly ambitious, and yet the greatest obstacle to the gratification of that ambition was his own tiresome nature, which made him, more than the other brothers, come into open conflict with Napoleon.

His young brother Louis, who was twenty-four in 1802, was apparently less ambitious; endowed with a fine intelligence and a kind heart, he would have been a sympathetic character if from this time forward he had not been depressed almost to the point of madness by a persecution mania which made him mistrustful, bitter and jealous. After three months of a marriage which, as a matter of fact, he had been forced into, he was driven to the conclusion that his brother had simply made him marry his own mistress. His neuropathic condition, which swiftly developed into a sort of frenzy, was destined to make this desirable young man a regular scourge to his family.

The youngest brother, Jerome, was a mere boy at this time; he was more amiable by nature, but even at this early age proved that he possessed the fiercely passionate temperament of all the Bonapartes, including the sisters, who, though extremely unlike in other respects, showed no sign of possessing a milder disposition than their brothers—very far from it!

Napoleon loved them all from the bottom of his heart, but was too intelligent not to judge them. For ten years his dealings with



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

his family involved him in a struggle, an extremely violent struggle, between love and reason, between the promptings of brotherly affection and the demands of high politics. He satisfied the former by loading them with honours and money, but from 1802 onwards he obeyed the voice of reason by refusing to contemplate the possibility of making one of his brothers his heir and thus handing over to him the government of France. It has more than once been asserted that he was entirely ruled by the "clan spirit" fostered by his native Corsica. But this was only partially true and, as we shall have occasion to see more than once, this famous "clan spirit" grew considerably weaker as time passed. As early as the year X he already considered Joseph too mediocre, Lucien too uncontrolled, Louis too much a victim of phobias, and Jerome too frivolous to suppose that, even had he wished it, he could have made them the future masters of the France he had placed on such a lofty pinnacle.

If he had had a son, the question of his successor would have been easily settled. Born of his own body and therefore dear to

**The Question of the Succession.** the country, the child would have been brought up to the task which would one day have fallen to his lot; he would have been disciplined both in politics and in war by an incomparable master.

At one time he had thought of finding a substitute for this heir, for whom he could no longer hope, and had married his brother Louis to his stepdaughter Hortense with the idea of adopting their child, in whose veins the blood of the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais would be united, and bringing him up under his own eye. But the marriage came to grief almost as soon as it took place, and in the early days of 1802 no "hope" was held out from that quarter. Thus the dream seemed to have ended in smoke. Consequently, as he had neither the desire to hand on the succession to his brothers, nor the power to create heirs, even semi-fictitious heirs, in the direct line, what purpose would the right of appointing his successor serve? He saw nothing but danger in the possession of such a prerogative; moreover, with his usual clear-sightedness, he was of opinion that after causing him untold anxiety it would, in the end, prove futile. "When one is dead, one is dead," he used to say. "Even Louis XIV's will was never carried out!"

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

Meanwhile, on the 20th Floréal (10th of May) the Council of State, under the influence of Roederer, Joseph's agent, passed a

Activities of  
the Council  
of State.

resolution to the effect that two questions, instead of one, should be submitted to the French people :

1. Was Napoleon Bonaparte to be Consul for life ?

2. Should he be granted the right of appointing

his own successor ? The First Consul, to whom the document was submitted, ran his pen angrily through the second. He refused to have his hand forced. Joseph hid his discomfiture from all except a few confidants. In any case he could wait. So strong was the monarchist wave that was bearing the country on its crest that even the Consul himself was bound to be caught up in it, and in a few weeks the question he had struck out would be re-inserted.

For the moment public opinion was indeed determined to give the Consul more than he desired. The Senate's resolution had disappointed, not to say irritated him. "It did not contain sufficient guarantee for the consolidation of the Republic," wrote one observer as early as the 20th Floréal. "The people would have liked the First Consul to keep his office for life and also to be given the right of appointing his own successor."

The answer that France would give to the questions submitted to her was never for a single moment in doubt. Nevertheless,

The  
Plebiscite.

the magnificent result of the plebiscite exceeded all expectations. As the ballot did not close until

the 30th Thermidor, voting continued for three

months in Paris and the provinces, and the first results were marvellous. For several weeks only one hostile vote was recorded in Paris. In the end the capital returned 60,395 *ayes* to 80 *nays*.

In the provinces some of the citizens supplemented their *ayes* with enthusiastic comments : "In voting for his life-tenure, we are voting for our own immortality." La Vendée, whose verdict was awaited with curiosity, cast 17,079 *for* and only 6 *against*—virtually unanimous approval !

The opposition seemed to have taken refuge almost entirely in the Army, from which the majority of the hostile votes emanated.

The Rennes  
Conspiracy.

The General Staff of the Army of the West, quartered at Rennes, even meditated forestalling the results of the plebiscite by means of a *coup*

*d'état*. A conspiracy was formed to induce the Army to make

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

what the Spaniards call a *pronunciamiento*, probably in favour of Bernadotte. This "libel plot," the main instigator of which was Bernadotte's own Chief of Staff, General Simon, was discovered by the police, and, thanks to the intervention of Fouché, was merely treated with lofty contempt by the First Consul. "This conspiracy, though detestable in itself," Fouché wrote to him, "is not altogether disadvantageous." Both its existence and its circumvention would prove that "the power which the civil disturbances had vested in the Army had now been withdrawn." And thus the country would see that the Consulship for life did not involve subjecting it to a Prætorian dictatorship.

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In Alsace a certain citizen had written in one of the registers : "It is not enough to secure the office for life ; the life ought to be secured for the office." This jingle was evidently intended

**Constitution of the Year X.** to imply that the new power required a strong new organisation to support it. Those in high places had been of this opinion from the very beginning, and while France was busy voting such wholesale modifications were being introduced into the Constitution of the year VIII as virtually to make it a new Constitution—the Constitution of the year X.

One of its most salient features was the abolition of the famous List of Notables, and the institution of Electoral Colleges which were to appoint the candidates from among whom the Government was to make its choice. The Presidents of these Colleges were to be selected by the Government and sent out from Paris, and would constitute a powerful lever for bringing pressure to bear on the choice of candidates. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that in restoring what Thiers calls "electoral life" to the country, the new machine more nearly resembled a representative system than the Constitution of the year VIII.

If we turn to the powers vested in the Assemblies, we find that they too were subjected to fundamental alterations. The Council

**Alteration in the Assemblies.** of State, which was becoming every day more closely associated with the work of the Government, was increased to fifty members, while the Tribunate was reduced to a similar number ; it was re-

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organised on the pattern of the Council and divided into sections which were to hold their deliberations *in camera*—behind closed doors. It was, moreover, deprived of the right of discussing treaties of peace or of alliance, while at the same time the right of ratifying such agreements was also taken from the Legislative Body, both functions now being handed over to a Privy Council.

The Senate, on the other hand, emerged considerably enlarged by these alterations; it was raised to the rank of a constituent body, and therefore had power to introduce modifications into the Constitution. It was given the right of dissolving the two legislative assemblies and also enjoyed the privilege, which is still part of the constitutional law of France, of quashing the verdicts of the tribunals on the score of illegality, which brought it into touch with the Supreme Court, an excellent institution which we may still see functioning most efficiently in the United States. The Senate was to consist of eighty instead of forty members, and the First Consul was to nominate the forty new members, which meant that for many years to come the Body thus honoured was to be subjected to the influence of the Executive. Thus in strengthening the Senate, the Executive strengthened itself.

The Executive still remained in the hands of the three Consuls, all of whom, at Bonaparte's express desire, were to hold office for life. Lastly, in the month of Thermidor, Bonaparte suddenly consented to accept the privilege he had refused two months previously—that of appointing his successor. He apparently gave way to the pressure brought to bear on him by his brothers' friends. Frédéric Masson may perhaps be right in laying the responsibility for this change of attitude on the part of the First Consul at the door of the hope expressed at this time by Hortense that she was about to become a mother. Moreover, just at this moment Josephine insisted on going at all costs to take the waters at Plombières, her ears ringing with Lucien's somewhat indecent taunt: "Now then, my dear sister, please make a little Cæsarian for us!"

The changes in the Constitution were also supposed to be submitted to the plebiscite, which was now drawing to a triumphant conclusion. The result was known at the end of Thermidor.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Out of 3,577,259 voters 3,568,885 had voted in favour of the Consulate for Life, half a million more than the number of votes cast in favour of the Constitution of the year VIII and the Consulate for Ten Years.

It was the Senate which, entrusted with the task of collecting the votes, announced the result in the form of a *senatus consultum*.

It was extremely brief: "The French people  
Consul for Life. nominates and the Senate proclaims Napoleon Bonaparte First Consul for life; a statue of Peace shall bear witness to posterity of the nation's gratitude."

The whole Assembly repaired in a body to the Tuileries to inform the Consul of the result of the plebiscite and to present the text of the *senatus consultum*. "As circumstances would have it," wrote Fauriel, "though it was not a mere coincidence, the deputation arrived in the middle of a full diplomatic sitting, and thus it came about that it was, so to speak, in the presence of the whole of Europe" that the Consul was informed of "the will of the people."

The 15th of August, his birthday, was proclaimed a national holiday, and in all public documents, as well as on the coins, there burst forth for the first time the prænomen of Napoleon which was so quickly to resound in every ear, and was now to precede the name of "Bonaparte," which was already ringing throughout Europe.

France did not submit to her fate; she hailed it with joy. Moreover, this fate had long since been decreed. "The Man" had come whose advent, as we know, had been predicted ever since 1793.<sup>1</sup> The mistakes that had been made had prepared the way for him; nevertheless, he might have foundered had he not been urged on in the face of every obstacle by a marvellous intellect combined with a sovereign will which had found expression in countless benefits conferred. And now the whole country was encouraging and even precipitating him towards his goal.

As early as the 5th of June, 1802, the rumour had been circulated that he would assume the title of "Emperor," and on the 20th of July it was declared that he intended to be a second Charlemagne. That in due course a name more fraught with magic

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *The Revolution*, p. 632.

## NEARING CONSULATE FOR LIFE

would descend upon that young head could now hardly be doubted. As a matter of fact, it would appear little more than a change of terms ; there would be nothing to alter in the Constitution, which was already entirely Cæsarian. “ In the hands of Cæsar, democracy,” it was declared, “ had abdicated.” The first Cæsar had been an extremely great man, but what raised Napoleon Bonaparte far above Cæsar was that, having rescued a great nation from ruin, and having in two short years restored peace both at home and abroad, put an end to civil strife and reconciled conflicting interests, restored the public fortune and raised the country to the highest pinnacle of glory, he had furthermore bestowed upon France those benefits which in the old days had redounded to the honour, not of Julius Cæsar, the great soldier, but of Augustus, who restored the State and brought peace to the Roman Empire.

**SOURCES.** Works already mentioned by Aulard, III, Bailleu, II, Boulay de la Meurthe (*Duc d'Enghien*), and Remâcle (*Relations*). *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VI. Locré, *Discussion du Code Civil*. Girardin, *Journal*, I. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Roederer, Molé, Vaublanc, Cornet, Pontécoulant, Comte de Mérode, Madame de la Tour-du-Pin, Savary, and Broglie. Fiévée, *Lettres*, II. Pingaud, *Comte d'Antraigues*. Fauriel, *Les derniers jours du Consulat*.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel, Aulard, Lanzac de Laborie, Madelin, Vandal, Herriot, Gilbert A. Thierry, Picard, Masson (*Famille*, II), Latreille, Levasseur, Marion, Driault, and Gautier. Lanzac de Laborie, *Paris sous Napoléon*, IV, V, VI, VII. Masson, *Joséphine de Beauharnais*. Aulard, *Etudes révolutionnaires*, IV. Gabory, *La Vendée et Napoléon*. Gignoux, *Le Baron Louis—Livre du Centenaire du Code Civil*. Amédée Madelin, *Le Premier Consul Législateur*. Giraud, *Chateaubriand*. Cassagne, *Vie politique de Chateaubriand*.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE RUPTURE OF THE PEACE OF AMIENS

"Fruitful peace." Opposition quashed. Support of the Catholics. Abolition of the Ministry of Police. Economic prosperity. Colonial policy; the expedition to San Domingo. England suspicious of everything. 'She remains in Malta and continues to extend hospitality to the enemies of the First Consul. Bonaparte is forced to seize further pledges on the Continent. He presides over the re-casting of Germany; the Imperial Recess. Attitude of the Tsar Alexander. The First Consul acts as mediator in Switzerland. Recriminations on the part of England. Russia urges England to ignore her treaty obligations. Europe still uncertain. England declares her intention of keeping Malta. The scene of the 13th of March with Lord Whitworth. The English ultimatum of April the 5th. Bonaparte prepares for war while still hoping to avoid it. Eleventh-hour negotiations. Disastrous consequences of the rupture. Those responsible for it.

"**A**T Amiens I believed in all good faith that my own fate and that of France were settled. I was going to devote myself entirely to the administration of the country and I believe that I should have done wonders." This statement, made in St. Helena, has, fortunately, been corroborated by a long report sent by the Prussian Minister to his King, and drawn up on the very day following the signature of the treaty. Lucchesini was taken into the confidence of the Consul, now wedded to the cause of peace; apparently the latter, determined "carefully to avoid all reference to war," was resolved "to turn to the benefit of agriculture, industry, commerce and the arts all those pecuniary resources which war at once absorbs and besmirches." Bonaparte talked to him with what might almost be described as greedy ardour about "canals to be completed and opened, roads to be made and repaired, ports to be dredged, towns to be embellished, of places of worship and religious establishments to be endowed, of public instruction and education to be provided for." And the foreign diplomat, as a rule a man far from friendly to the First Consul, felt that the illustrious speaker was absolutely

"Fruitful  
Peace."

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

sincere and could not help believing and admiring him. Peace was to be ten times more productive of glory than war had been— such was the thought that filled the mind of the Great Man in the spring of 1802.

For this peace abroad was essential, but even more important was it to secure peace at home, and the work of pacification had to be completed by gaining the support of all the parties. For

**Opposition  
Quashed.**

the time being they seemed to have been reduced to subjection. In the Assemblies opposition had died out. They did little work and met but rarely, while the interest they aroused in the general public grew every day less and less. At one momentous session there were only eleven people in the public benches of the Tribune and it was suggested on all sides that such a useless Assembly might well be abolished. The Senate, upon which the new Constitution had conferred so much power, did not seem disposed to abuse it; whole sessions were taken up in discussing the new uniform which these Conscript Fathers were anxious to have, and in the end they asked the First Consul to provide them with the design. Being a good-natured ruler, he gave them three, all of them embroidered. They had not yet gone to the length of debating the best sauce to be served with turbot, as Caracalla's Senate had once done, but they were not far from it.

A new source of strength for the First Consul was the enthusiastic support of the Catholics. So great, indeed, was their enthusiasm that he even had to damp their ardour.

**Support of  
the Catholics.**

When Portalis informed him that some of the Bishops were declaring that "they were Bishops by the grace of God and the nomination of the First Consul," Bonaparte instructed them to use the formula "by the divine mercy and the grace of the Holy See," because, as he very rightly explained, "it is appointment by the Holy See that constitutes a Bishop." This wise attitude completed the conquest of Caprara, the Papal Legate, and won him over to the side of a ruler who was a more orthodox Roman Catholic than his own Bishops. Everywhere he insisted upon discipline, moderation and peace, and the faithful were full of gratitude to him for it. Recognising all the benefits they had received, they gave their full approval to Boisgelin, a Bishop of the *Ancien Régime*, who had become



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Archbishop of Tours, when he acclaimed the Consulate as "the legitimate Government, at once National and Catholic, without which we should have neither religion nor country." Bonaparte was delighted. "My dear fellow, you could not have put it better yourself!" he observed to Roederer, the great advocate of his increase of power.

He continued to hold the balance between the old parties, with the result that a process of fusion began to take place. "It might be said," wrote one correspondent shortly afterwards, "that the First Consul united all the parties into one great party which could almost be called the National Party."

So convinced was he that the parties had really been stifled that he made up his mind to emphasise the fact by means of an act that would stand out unique in history. He would abolish the Ministry of General Police, created by the Directory, when everything in France was civil strife, violence and conspiracy.

As a matter of fact, his main object was to get rid of Fouché without having to humiliate him by actual dismissal.

Only one reason was advanced for the step. After all, the Ministry of General Police was an institution created at a time when the country was in a state of siege. But with the restoration of peace, conspiracies should cease; for in the past they had been fomented by the intrigues of England and kept alive by her subsidies. Thus, the abolition of a Ministry charged with the task of unearthing conspiracies would be at once a supreme sign of confidence in the country and in the stability of peace.

Fouché himself, on being consulted by Bonaparte, was cunning enough to express agreement, and did so with the apparent goodwill this sly fox could so easily feign, and which once again deceived his chief. His attitude restored him to the Master's favour, and even confidence.

When, on the 26th Fructidor, the Ministry was definitely abolished, a decree was passed making Fouché a member of the Senate, and, in the message announcing this nomination, the First Consul declared that "if circumstances should arise making a Ministry of General Police once again necessary, the Government could not possibly find anyone more worthy of its confidence than Citizen Fouché." It was a rash statement, for it made this man, who

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

would never be troubled by scruples, have an interest in the embarrassments and failures of the Government which had dismissed him from office.

Be this as it may, the act certainly seemed to provide striking proof of the confidence felt by the head of the country both in the establishment of peace in Europe and the definite termination of civil strife at home.

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The First Consul founded his hopes for the future prosperity of the country quite as much on this internal tranquillity as on the pacification of Europe.

Years afterwards, when the war had broken out again without any prospect of ever being terminated, Napoleon wrote to one of his Ministers: "I am grieved beyond measure by my manner of life which drags me into camps and turns my eyes away from the first object of my care, the first need of my heart—the sound and solid organisation of everything connected with finance, trade and manufacture." This letter of 1806 clearly breathes a sigh of regret for those glorious days of 1802 when, thinking that he would never again be "dragged into camps," he had been able, though only for a few short months, to apply his great mind to the vast problems of economic revival.

By refusing to make any commercial treaty with England, he had given the first practical proof of his intention of protecting

**Economic Prosperity.** French manufactures. Thus, industry was reassured and was also given further encouragement

in every possible way. The first Exhibition, organised in the middle of the war, had been most successful; during it certain manufacturers, like Richard and Lenoir, had booked 400,000 francs' worth of orders in a few weeks. The Consul hoped that this institution would be repeated on a grander scale every year. Twelve months after the signature of the peace preliminaries trade and industry had developed to such an extent that the highest hopes were entertained, and the Exhibition of the year X, which was incomparably finer than its predecessor, met with enthusiastic support from the public. The Consul used to visit it, had everything explained to him, and with a judicious word of praise, stimulated effort by an appeal to self-esteem.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Trade, of course, was bound to be included in this economic organisation. The foundation of Chambers of Commerce in twenty-two towns on the 3rd Nivôse of the year Trade.

XI (21st of December, 1802) was the first step. As a matter of fact, the commercial world would have preferred a less strict system of protection and the Consul was occasionally bored by their complaints. Moreover, he had very decided ideas on the subject of the economic hierarchy, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, ideas which were far from agreeable to business men who never altogether forgave him. "The most important concern of France is agriculture," he was wont to say; "industry comes second. Trade, in so far as it is necessary to the development of both, occupies a similar position."

Agriculture! Bonaparte was well aware that herein lay the real wealth of France. "The rule of the peasant has come!" wrote one correspondent from the provinces. In the first place Bonaparte, by the confirmation of the new tenure of land, had set at rest the fears of the peasantry, after which he had overwhelmed them with attention; for it was the peasant who grew the corn, the corn that made the bread, and bread that kept the masses quiet. This was the Consul's constant preoccupation—to secure bread for the people, for want rather than conspiracy was the mother of revolution. He was anxious for the General Councils to be composed chiefly of well-to-do agriculturists whom he would thus be able to make the most influential section of the community. And in this connection he had a further grand plan of reconstruction in mind in 1802. Too much land, in his opinion, was being allowed to lie fallow—twenty-five per cent of arable land, in fact; but by encouraging agriculturists to combine, he hoped to put an end to the partitioning up of the land due to the Revolution, the drawbacks of which had already been reported to him by some of the Prefects. But these plans, too, were, unfortunately, doomed to remain to some extent unfulfilled; for war broke out again before they could be carried out. Nevertheless, in 1814, wrote one Englishwoman, the allied troops were amazed at finding in France "a state of abundance and prosperity enjoyed by no other country in Europe."

Bonaparte also put in hand the work of most practical utility for the agriculturist, and, indeed, for the whole of the community

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

—the reorganisation of the entire road system of the country. From the great Alpine routes which were no sooner planned than work on them was begun, to the smallest by-ways, everything had been set in motion by the beginning of the year XI, with the result that in 1804 a German named Campe did not recognise the roads on which three years previously he had almost broken his bones. The canals, neglected for years, were put into working

**The Canals** order again, the Ourcq Canal was opened, the Canal de l'Est almost completely finished, and the Aigues-Mortes and Rhône Canals begun. The First Consul insisted upon being kept informed of the progress of the work, lock by lock. The port of Cherbourg was transformed, the harbours of Le Havre and Boulogne were dredged; new towns were planned and before long sprang up out of the ground, first and foremost among them Napoléon-Vendée, the future capital of La Vendée. And a scheme for a new Paris—to which I shall return—was drawn up and put in hand before three years had passed.

As twelve months of peace had completed the task of restoring the public finances, France now seemed to have embarked upon a career of dazzling prosperity. The official report on the condition of the Republic in the year XI reads like the statement of a thoroughly satisfied company director to his shareholders after a year of brilliant success. "We must earn the money France is paying us," the Consul had said. And he was paying back his "shareholders," that is, everybody in the country, a hundred times over in the shape of work, salaries and profits.

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But all this constituted only a part of the grand programme of peace. The restoration of economic prosperity, and, above all, of trade in France was to find splendid support in the reconstruction and improvement of magnificent colonies all grouped in one part of the world.

Previous to the disastrous Treaty of Paris, made in 1763, France had possessed extremely rich territories in America. But

**Colonial Policy.** after abandoning Acadia and Canada to England, she ceded the huge province of Louisiana to Spain, after which, as the result of a negro rebellion and the English occupation, she lost, together with Martinique and

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Guadeloupe, the large island of San Domingo, three quarters of which had belonged to her. Under the dictatorship of a negro, named Toussaint-Louverture, San Domingo proclaimed itself an independent State, and profiting by the uncertain condition of affairs, laid claim to autonomy under the vague and far distant suzerainty of France. By the Treaty of Amiens, Guadeloupe and Martinique were restored to France, together with Senegal, the Îles de France and Bourbon, as well as the three towns in India, which were all that remained of her Asiatic Empire. But before this Spain had handed back Louisiana to her and had also given her the Spanish portion of San Domingo. This magnificent island was to be the finest jewel in France's new American empire, but most of it had to be reconquered.

In order to prove his interest in this reconquest, Bonaparte had for eight months been organising an expedition for "the islands," the command of which he entrusted to his own brother-in-law, Leclerc. He even went so far as to insist upon his sister Pauline accompanying her husband. It was expected that the negro rebellion would easily be crushed by a force of 15,000 men. Toussaint-Louverture, terrified out of his wits, offered to come to terms, to bind San Domingo by close ties to France, and to govern in her name. But Napoleon preferred to use force, and lived to regret it. "I ought to have come to terms with the black chief," he exclaimed

with a sigh long afterwards. For, when the island had apparently been conquered, and Toussaint captured by means of an ambush, far from creditable to the French, his lieutenants took up arms again and carried on a terrible and interminable guerilla or, rather, hill war which, with the help of the lethal climate, exterminated the expeditionary force. Leclerc himself fell a victim to it. Doubtless the French would have pulled through in the end, but the maritime war broke out again just when they might have succeeded, and everything was lost. In April, 1802, however, the expedition had apparently achieved its aim and restored San Domingo to the hands of the French, whilst Louisiana—the whole of the vast basin of the Mississippi—having been given a French Prefect, and placed under the tricolour, was ready to be developed into a prosperous possession. The First Consul intended this collection of colonies to provide magnificent support

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for the already extensive economic activities of the mother country. This is what he had meant by "fruitful peace."

\* \* \* \* \*

All this filled England with stupefaction which soon developed into consternation.

Pitt himself had declared that it had been wise to make peace, since the country needed a period of rest, however short. But

England  
filled with  
Anxiety.

both for friends and foes the peace was nothing more than a truce. Even Lord Addington, the Prime Minister, in apologising for having signed the treaty, added: "I am well persuaded that,

whatever may happen, it is the wisest course for us to husband our resources at present that we may be the better prepared, if that should be our lot, to exert ourselves with energy and effect." And what had been the result of six months of peace? A violent reaction had set in! Lord Grenville, in the House of Lords, denounced the peace as being worse than the war, while Lord Carnarvon stigmatised it as disgraceful. The Peers were less resigned than any other class in the community to the peace which they regarded as the coping-stone and, consequently, the justification of that French Revolution which they loathed and detested as much as did any of the crowned heads of Europe. Holding their own country in subjection to an oligarchy, they already saw the upholders of democracy discussing reform as a result of the peace, while one English historian actually wrote that the only hope for the aristocracy was to involve the country in war so that it might forget about reform. The commercial world, too, had urged the conclusion of peace only because they hoped to secure an advantageous commercial treaty; but when they saw the development of French industry they veered round completely and became more rabid than anybody else against the peace they had so enthusiastically acclaimed. The First Consul categorically refused even to consider the possibility of a commercial treaty, arguing that those who demanded it would never renew a terrible war just for the sake of a few bales of merchandise. Apparently he was unaware that even the Hundred Years War had been fought for little else than sordid gain. Six months after the Treaty of Amiens, City men were already declaring that

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unless they could secure a commercial treaty they would be ruined, and they watched with terror the results of "a fruitful peace" taking the shape of a prodigious increase of production in France. Even war, with all its inconveniences and possible disasters, was better than this !

The colonial enterprises of the Republic put the coping-stone to the anxiety and vexation of Great Britain. Throughout the course of history England had always regarded the breaking of fresh ground outside Europe by any other country than herself as a direct attack. In the eighteenth century she had ruined the colonial Empire of France, and just recently that of Holland as well; she was now making preparations to destroy the Spanish Empire also. The return of Louisiana to France had filled her with consternation ; the expedition to San Domingo, although the First Consul, with a desire to be amenable rare in him, had endeavoured to make it acceptable to her, exasperated her beyond measure. A huge colonial Empire, stretching from Guiana to Louisiana, was about to be founded in America, and Europe would be able to "get groceries" without the help of England. Hardly had the expedition to San Domingo been decided upon in Paris than Lawrence, in the House of Commons, denounced the Gallic colossus which, with one foot in the Amazon River and the other in the Mississippi, had arisen in the New World. And England turned regretful eyes back to the Treaty of Paris of 1763 which, by confirming the loss of her colonies, had, thirty years previously, clipped the wings of humiliated France.

To make matters worse, France, already provided with an extensive sea-board of her own, was now also in possession of the coast of Holland, which was every day becoming more closely bound to her. As I have already remarked, to have the French in Antwerp was a source of constant anxiety to England, but for them to remain permanently in Amsterdam alarmed her beyond description. Six months previously, the British Government, feeling their country had been worsted in the struggle and anxious to have peace for a while, had not dared, as I have already pointed out, to raise this question during the course of the peace negotiations ; they had relied on the engagements entered into at Lunéville, which had evoked Bonaparte to answer their subsequent demands in this connection by saying that it was a matter

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which concerned only the Emperor and himself. The First Consul, however, wrote to the King of Prussia, " Having decided to evacuate Holland and Switzerland, I shall never undertake to do so in any treaty."

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All this made England but little inclined to carry out the terms of the treaty, which, as far as Bonaparte was concerned, depended entirely on the evacuation of Malta by the English. He was so firmly convinced that this evacuation was imminent that, without waiting for it to be actually carried out, he had already loyally fulfilled his part of the bargain and removed his troops from

England Tarentum. But the English showed no sign of abandoning the island of the Knights of St. John.

Remains in Malta. Moreover, a disquieting campaign had been

inaugurated in England, urging the retention of Malta, in spite of the treaty. Nelson described it as one of the most important stations on the route to India, while Pelham, in the House of Commons, declared that the island was absolutely necessary to Great Britain in order to safeguard Egypt against the designs of France.

According to the clause of the treaty, the English garrison was to hand over Malta to the Knights at the very latest by the end of September, 1802, but the English made the excuse that the Order of St. John had hardly yet been reorganised and had no Grand Master. And at the end of December, two months later than the longest postponement provided for at Amiens, they were apparently not even making preparations to evacuate their conquest.

Though they did not as yet alarm him, these delays irritated Bonaparte, because they created an atmosphere of uncertainty which was unfavourable to the grand schemes he had in view. Determined not to give way on the question of Malta, which would be " a second Gibraltar," he was not in a frame of mind to allow himself to be " amused." He had already ceased to trust the good faith of England, and henceforward he regarded the treaty as being merely an armistice; this hampered the practical application of the great plans he had made for an epoch of " fruitful peace," which he would have liked to carry out with all possible speed.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

He had yet further grievances. The existence of the treaty implied the resumption of cordial relations between the two countries thus "reconciled." But, long before the con-

England  
Shelters  
Bonaparte's  
Enemies.

clusion of peace, England had been paying pensions to princes of the House of Bourbon living near Edinburgh, giving shelter to Chouan conspirators, and, in spite of her official Anglicanism, encourag-

ing the petty agitation of French Bishops who had sought refuge in London and refused to resign. She had also aided and abetted the abominable campaign of slander conducted, in a French paper published in London, by the *émigré* Peltier against the head of the French nation. Bonaparte considered all this should have stopped after Amiens; but it had not stopped. In response to urgent representations the British Government had merely turned out suspected Chouans; but the Comte d'Artois, who was still paid a pension, was received as a prince, wearing all his orders and decorations, at public functions; Cadoudal, whom Talleyrand informed the Foreign Office was a "horrible man," was scarcely even watched; the Bishop of Arras, who was still in London, did not discontinue his efforts to make his old flock suffer from a guilty conscience, and Peltier's campaign of abuse against Bonaparte and everything connected with him became more virulent than ever. The First Consul sent a note through Talleyrand demanding the expulsion of all these people from England. Hawkesbury, trying to gain time, and obviously hostile, refused to reply. Bonaparte lost patience, and in a note inserted in the *Moniteur* of the 20th Thermidor (the 8th of August, 1802), denounced the hospitality unduly accorded to the mortal enemies of the French Government by a country officially friendly to it again. As the note was couched in the most pungent terms, the English Government in its turn lodged a protest; the London press published virulent retorts to the *Moniteur* article, and by the 19th of August everybody in Paris was going about with long faces, declaring that all too soon this pen-and-ink campaign would end in a campaign of shot and shell.

The worst of the matter was that, regarding himself as having been duped, the First Consul, confronted by the failure to carry out the terms of the treaty, was now driven to abandon his recent conciliatory attitude on the Continent and thus furnished not only

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

Great Britain, but also the latter's allies, with the pretexts for which they were waiting in order to be able to raise the cry of "Imperialism!" from London to St. Petersburg.

**Bonaparte's Policy in Spain and Italy.** With Spain, whom the apathy of the all-powerful Minister Godoy had placed at his mercy, he arranged an alliance which threatened Portugal,

once more a regular English colony, with invasion the moment Great Britain broke the peace. In Italy, which he regarded as belonging to him, he bound Genoa more closely to him by means of a constitution of his own making, as well as Etruria, where certain Bourbon nonentities were still in power only because they were under his ever more onerous protection. As for the Piedmont, it had already become a regular French province, when, at the end of August, by way of retaliation for the failure to evacuate Malta, Bonaparte decided to annex it to France by a mere decree.

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The seriousness of the situation was aggravated by the fact that Russia and Austria were already perturbed at seeing the First Consul presiding over the remoulding of Germany as though by sovereign right.

As a matter of fact, Bonaparte was in a position to declare that he had been formally invited, and even begged, by the German princes themselves to act as mediator, and that he was, moreover, upholding the time-honoured traditions of French policy. The

**The Re-casting of Germany.** Germanic Empire was falling to pieces; the princes who had been driven away from the left bank of the Rhine were, by the terms of the

Treaty of Lunéville, to be given compensation on the right bank at the expense of the secularised ecclesiastical principalities; this meant a general scramble in which Austria and Prussia would play the leading part. The former had already laid hands on the secularised bishoprics she had been promised, and Prussia, extremely disquieted, was bubbling over with jealousy and impatience. Moreover, the various German princes, who were in some way related to the Tsar, were calling upon him to make himself the protector of their interests. Prussia, afraid that she would not be given a large enough share in the spoils, turned to France, and, supported by ten other States, begged her to help

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them realise their ambitious designs. The First Consul would probably, in any case, have intervened, but Austria's assumption that she should be the only country to benefit, together with Russia's pretensions to interfere, spurred him on to do so. He was not indulging in any dreams of annexation in this quarter; the Rhine was to remain the frontier of the Republic; but he was determined that a German Rhineland province should be formed on the other side of the river to act, as it had done in the time of Louis XIV, as a buffer State between France and the rest of Germany, consisting of Prussia and Austria, together with their respective dependants. Ten German princes, headed by Bavaria and Württemberg, agreed to this plan.

Prussia also gave it her support; nay, she even urged its immediate execution. The fact of the matter was that the Prussian Minister in Paris had been the first to suggest these drastic measures to Talleyrand as early as December, 1801. "The whole of Germany must be remoulded," he had declared; and when Talleyrand, with his usual caution, had referred to the difficulties likely to be raised by the various Powers concerned, he had replied "that a strength of will as resolute as General Bonaparte's . . . would easily overcome these obstacles." While the agents of twenty anxious princes were intriguing in Paris with a view to obtaining part of the enormous booty, the King of Prussia outdid all the rest in his efforts to induce the First Consul to support his claims. Prussia was playing for heavy stakes, for by way of compensation for about 4,375 square miles of territory and 125,000 subjects lost on the left bank, she aspired to the incorporation of no less than 19,200 square miles of territory with a population of 500,000. And when the First Consul gave a formal promise of support, the Prussian Secretary of State wrote that "all Berlin was highly delighted."

Thus it was owing to the solicitations and entreaties of these Germans that, during the summer and autumn of 1802, this huge business of liquidation, which was to result in the famous Imperial

Recess of the 25th of February, 1803, was transferred to Paris. The Imperial Recess was a new statute dealing not only with territory but also with politics. By it the number of Electors was raised to ten, of whom six were Protestants, which meant that,

The  
Imperial  
Recess.

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

sooner or later, the Empire would be irrecoverably torn from the House of Austria. Prussia, who would chiefly benefit by this re-shuffling of the Empire, in order to make doubly sure, also made a treaty of counter-insurance with the Tsar. As early as June, 1802, Alexander had come to Memel, where he had met the Prussian princes; here the King of Prussia had obtained his permission to sign the Recess on the understanding that Berlin's gratitude to France would not weigh too heavily in the balance when the day arrived for forming a new coalition of the European Powers against her.

The germs of this coalition already existed in the dissatisfaction felt by both Austria and Russia with the settlement of affairs in Germany and Italy. Vienna was particularly incensed. "When shall we see the end of this torrent . . . which is more destructive in peace than in war?" they were saying in Vienna. Moreover,

**The Tsar's  
Attitude.**

the Tsar Alexander, whose attitude had been so uncertain at the beginning of his reign, showed signs of becoming more and more hostile to the

policy of the First Consul. Owing to an irresistible feeling of admiration for Bonaparte, the young prince had displayed considerable hesitation in yielding to the anti-French forces about him, which were the logical outcome of his father's assassination; but it was not long before his pride was made to suffer by the growing importance achieved by the personality of the "Corsican." Markoff, the Russian Minister in Paris, who, even the Russians themselves acknowledged had been chosen on account of his violent hatred of France, heaped up recriminations, conducted intrigues, and by the reports he sent to St. Petersburg, fanned the glowing embers of the Tsar's antipathy to white heat. The First Consul's intervention in Germany was the last straw, and England, ever on the watch, now felt encouraged not to carry out the terms of the treaty, as she had reason to be confident that, in case of a rupture with France, she would be followed by Russia and perhaps Austria. It happened that just at this juncture Bonaparte had furthermore been solicited by the parties who were tearing each other to pieces in Switzerland to act as mediator between them,

and had given the "Helvetic League" a Constitution—and an extremely wise Constitution to boot! This incensed England still further, and she everywhere spread the alarm that, in spite of the "neutrality"

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

guaranteed by this new statute, the head of the French Government intended to treat Switzerland as a protectorate, which, she added, was vitually equivalent to annexation.

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As a matter of fact, England was searching high and low for reasons or even for pretexts not to carry out the terms of the treaty. Lord Hawkesbury informed Otto, the French envoy, that in spite of England's determination not to meddle in any way with Continental affairs she was being unwillingly forced to do so both by the complaints she had received and by public opinion at home, which had expressed itself with unexampled energy. This was perfectly true. Public opinion, which, a short while previously, had brought pressure to bear upon the Government in the interests of peace, was now urging it on to war, and the Cabinet would no longer have dared even to contemplate the possibility of evacuating Malta. Bonaparte continued to complain of this signal breach of the treaty: "Piedmont, Holland, Germany and Switzerland?" was the burden of his plaint. "Where in the Treaty of Amiens do we find these names mentioned? I can discover only two names there—Tarentum, which I have evacuated, and Malta, which you have not evacuated."

In spite of this state of tension, both sides, in order to keep up appearances, had appointed ambassadors, General Andréossy having been sent to London and Lord Whitworth to Paris. Andréossy, however, was instructed to ignore any overtures on the subject of a commercial treaty as long as England "had failed to prove that she really wished to exchange a state of affairs which, as a matter of fact, merely constituted a cessation of hostilities for one of actual peace." By October relations had become so strained that Bonaparte exclaimed in the presence of Talleyrand: "England desires war; she shall have it!" and he decided to dictate a menacing despatch to his Minister. "If Austria should interfere in any way, then it will be England who will have forced us to conquer Europe." And, in answer to the demands made by England, but not contained in the Treaty of Amiens, he added: "The whole Treaty of Amiens and nothing but the Treaty of Amiens." To which Lord

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

Hawkesbury retorted that England wanted the *status quo ante* in Europe, and nothing but that!

Moreover, England, henceforward entirely alienated from the First Consul, and a prey to all manner of justifiable and unjustifiable anxieties, was becoming agitated. She even went so far as to regard it as a grievance that Bonaparte should have chosen Normandy as the scene of his first visit to the provinces!

General Andréossy, unfortunately, was ill fitted to overawe anybody; he was a Liberal belonging to Joseph's circle, and, from the very first, had been firmly convinced that the First Consul was immoderate in his demands. Bonaparte's claims, already toned down by Talleyrand, and then presented through the faltering lips of the Ambassador, lost a good deal of their

force. Lord Whitworth, on the contrary, was just the opposite—which was equally unfortunate.

A member of the peerage, full of pride of caste and country, despising and detesting the system born of the utterly detestable Revolution, dry, haughty and abrupt, he represented the Pitt rather than the Addington spirit, and, far from being a man to allay dissensions, he possessed every qualification for making them more acrimonious than ever. Never for a moment did he hesitate to inform his intimates that under no circumstances would England relinquish Malta. Moreover, Russia was now urging England to resist. A note addressed from

Russia  
Approaches  
England.

St. Petersburg to Woronzoff, the Russian Ambassador in London, declared that "Russia and England had so many interests in common that

the two Powers might well regard themselves as allies." As soon as this was known in London, the English adversaries of the treaty became bolder.

As in these circumstances Paris should have strained every nerve to avoid giving the smallest cause for offence, an incident which occurred at this time still remains a mystery. Immediately after Amiens, General Sebastiani was entrusted with a "secret"

mission to go to the Levant and find out whether any attachment to France still survived in this part of the world. He visited Egypt and Syria and

returned with a favourable report. Out of bravado, the First Consul gave this report the utmost possible publicity by having it

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printed in the *Moniteur*. Addington, who had already explained in the presence of Andréossy that he was powerless against public opinion in England, expressed his horror and consternation. Great Britain, exasperated by having been obliged to hand back Alexandria to the Turks, now exclaimed that France was making preparations to install herself once more in Egypt. And the Prime Minister categorically informed the French Ambassador that, in the circumstances, the evacuation of Malta could not be considered for some time to come; public opinion in England would not allow of it.

In the face of this declaration the First Consul lost his temper. On the 18th of February he summoned Lord Whitworth to him and, infuriated by the haughty disdain with which the noble Lord received his expostulations, let himself go to such an extent that after an interview of two hours the Ambassador wrote contemptuously: "He talked more like a captain of dragoons than the head of one of the greatest States in Europe." But there was worse yet to come. In the *Report on the situation of the Republic* sent to the Senate and the Legislative Body, the First Consul inserted the following sentence, which, calculated to overawe, was merely wounding: "Whatever the success of the intrigue in London, it will not induce any other countries to form fresh coalitions; and the Government can with justifiable pride declare that England cannot to-day fight France single-handed."

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This haughty optimism was inspired by news received in Paris regarding the various European parties. The Tsar, who was still playing a double game, now seemed to have reverted to a policy more favourable to France. In any case, confronted by the menace

of a rupture between London and Paris, the whole of Europe had taken fright. Having encouraged London to deny her obligations, it now blamed her for having done so. Even from London the Russian Ambassador, though extremely hostile to France, nevertheless wrote of the British Government: "Its aim will always be to destroy France as being its only rival and then to rule despotically over the whole world. It has allowed

Rupture with England Imminent.

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

Bonaparte a free hand in order to secure a pretext for war, which it will certainly get, and on the fall of the Ottoman Empire it will seize Egypt." And Markoff himself, soon after the rupture, wrote, "England desired, if not war, at least the abrogation of the Treaty of Amiens."

Paris now came to the conclusion that it was high time to have done with all this. And Talleyrand instructed Andréossy to demand categorically from England the evacuation of Malta, the expulsion of Georges Cadoudal and his cut-throats, the suppression of the French newspapers issued in London, and the prevention of publication in the English newspapers of "outrageous attacks on France and the First Consul, repugnant alike to public decency, the rights of civilised nations and the state of peace." After allowing three long weeks to elapse, Hawkesbury replied by making French aggrandisement the excuse for the retention of Malta, and the British tradition of freedom of the press for allowing the newspapers to indulge in a campaign of libel. Meanwhile, the King had asked Parliament for supplies in order to raise fresh troops. Bonaparte's retort was to give orders for forces to be held in readiness in the Channel ports, and since London had cynically declared that Malta was not to be evacuated, to re-occupy Tarentum without any attempt at concealment.

But, on the eve of what now seemed like almost certain rupture, he wished to denounce those responsible for it before the whole of Europe. On the 22nd Ventôse (the 13th of March), during an audience granted to the diplomatic corps, he sharply challenged Lord Whitworth. "So, you want war!" he exclaimed. When the noble Lord made a sign of dissent, the First Consul lost his temper; with a wave of the hand, he swept aside all the pretexts behind which the bad faith of Great Britain endeavoured to find shelter, and once again violently demanded the evacuation of Malta. On the Ambassador assuring him that the whole matter could be arranged by means of amicable explanations, he retorted that "no explanations were necessary in the case of stipulations so clear and positive as those contained in the Treaty of Amiens." Whereupon, turning away, he added in grave tones: "Very well! We will fight in a fortnight's time!" Azara and Markoff, two of the diplomats present, endeavoured to put in a conciliatory



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

word and suggested that, in spite of all, some arrangement might be reached. "I ask for nothing better," replied Bonaparte, "but it is either Malta or war!" Then he added in louder tones: "The English want war, but if they are the first to draw the sword, I shall be the last to sheathe it. They do not respect treaties. In future treaties must be hung with crape." But he immediately endeavoured to revert to a more friendly tone, and inquired after Lady Whitworth. It was no good, however, and, unable to contain himself, he again repeated: "Treaties must be respected! Woe to those who do not respect treaties! They will be held responsible in the eyes of Europe!" And he left the room, again exclaiming: "Malta or war!"

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Europe was informed and the Chancelleries were filled with consternation. London was generally held to blame, but the Tsar conveyed to England that in his opinion "she would do well to keep Malta." He was hoping that the dispute would lend itself to fruitful mediation on his part.

As a matter of fact, neither France nor England was yet ready to come to grips. Bonaparte had not enough money for the grand blow he wished to strike at the very heart of England, while the latter had not yet been able to confirm her alliances. She pretended to attach no importance to the scene of the 13th of

England's March. But on the 5th of April Whitworth, believing that the ground was now sufficiently prepared, at last took the offensive. He sent

Talleyrand a note suggesting the following bases for discussion:

1. That His Britannic Majesty should retain Malta for ten years.
2. That the island of Lampedusa, near Malta, should be ceded to him in perpetuity. (Failing Malta, Lampedusa would have been a "second Gibraltar.")
3. That the French troops should evacuate Holland and Switzerland. If after an interval of a week he had not received a satisfactory reply, he had instructions to send in his papers. This was an ultimatum. Bonaparte did not appear to be perturbed, but acted as though the door were still open for negotiation. He had made up his mind, but wished to delay matters for a while longer.

He required money and knew where to find it. The war with

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

England, which would last a long time, had put an end to his great colonial enterprise. In San Domingo a terrible and murderous guerilla war was still dragging on, and, with the sea closed to transports, would be interminable. But this meant that Louisiana, too, was utterly useless; to cling to it inevitably meant running the risk of allowing it to fall into the hands of England, together with the Antilles. He accordingly sold it on the 28th of April for eighty millions to the United States. These eighty millions were to be used against England to pay for the invasion. The invasion had been decided upon, and urgent orders were given for the arming of the ports and coasts, and it was clear that preparations were being made for a huge cross-Channel expedition.

Meanwhile, discussions were still being carried on, and even Whitworth himself was astonished to find the First Consul so ready to negotiate and avoid a rupture; but this merely served to strengthen him in his uncompromising attitude. He was convinced that at the first threat of departure everybody would be at his feet; and on the 2nd of May he asked to have his papers. Talleyrand offered to consent to the handing over of Malta to one of the three guaranteeing Powers. Whitworth adhered to the terms of his ultimatum. It was at this juncture that Markoff, who had been kept informed, put forward the offer of Russian mediation. But Whitworth was so infatuated that he refused it.

On the 11th Bonaparte summoned his council and communicated the terms of the ultimatum to it. The members were unanimously agreed that they should be refused, and the British Ambassador was sent his papers. He was extremely surprised and, for a moment, perplexed; for, after leaving Paris, he stopped at Chantilly. The First Consul made one last effort, and sent the Ambassador an urgent despatch to say that he would give way on the subject of Malta. The English might keep it for ten years; in that case, however, the French would re-occupy Tarentum. But Whitworth, who had now fully determined on the rupture, contemptuously continued his journey to Calais.

**Bonaparte  
Prepares  
for War.**

**Last  
Efforts to  
Avoid War.**

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## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

"I was forced into it," the First Consul was able to declare, shortly afterwards to the Pope. And, as a matter of fact, those most hostile to the consular Government were clearly under the impression that, up to the last moment, Bonaparte had desired and even hoped to keep the peace. "It seems certain," wrote one of the Royalist agents, "that he has only decided on war with the utmost reluctance." French public opinion, which was outraged, threw the whole responsibility for the rupture on "Albion."

England, on the contrary, went mad with joy, the general opinion in London being that the rupture would be a heavy blow to the credit of the Consul and to his power. This would be

England Welcomes War.	a good opportunity for turning out Cadoudal's Chouans and sending them back to France. England had been wise to keep them up her sleeve!
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On the 24th of May Pitt made a triumphant return to Parliament. Cheered to the echo, he pronounced a regular diatribe against France and the French Government; it was a speech full of hatred and violence, but extremely eloquent. Fox rose to reply; he was one of the few Englishmen who would sincerely have preferred peace and would have believed in its durability. A visit he had paid to the First Consul had convinced him that the latter really wished for peace and even for friendship with England. After Pitt had depicted France as having used the peace in order to enlarge her boundaries and strengthen and enrich herself, Fox sadly replied that, this being so, any progress made by France abroad and even at home, in the way of trade and manufacture, was to be regarded as a just cause for war and a menace to England!

This true-hearted Englishman saw clearly; in a single sentence he described the jealous attitude of his country and summed up the history of the year that had passed since the signature of the Treaty of Amiens.

Nevertheless, it must be confessed that Pitt was right and Fox was wrong. England had very quickly and very rightly come to the conclusion that the only result of the peace was a fresh outburst of prosperity for France which, however, would not prevent her from extending her power abroad. Thus, to use the expression current in Westminster, peace was "more disastrous" for Great Britain than the most costly of wars. Her hidebound

## RUPTURE OF PEACE OF AMIENS

traditional policy demanded the rupture of the Peace of Amiens. At many a critical moment during the next ten years she had perforce to ask herself whether she had not made a mistake, and whether, in breaking it, she had not contributed more than any other country to the foundation of the French Empire by engaging in a struggle which, until 1812, was to be a constant menace to her coasts and the ruination of her trade ; it was destined to throw her finances into complete disorder and bring her within an ace of bankruptcy and defeat. When, in 1814, she had beaten the Great Man and, for the time being, strangled France, she was, however, in a position to congratulate herself on having broken the peace in 1803. But as for asserting, as some historians have done, that it was not England who broke it, or that she was forced to do so by the ambition of Bonaparte, how is it possible seriously to make such a statement ?

The unfortunate part of the matter was that from this moment, as was declared at the time, it was a case of "Rome and Carthage" over again. Rome in the old days had got the better of Carthage, but, in order to do so, she had been inveigled into the conquest of the whole of the Mediterranean basin. And the struggle with England was destined to turn Bonaparte away from the path he had traced out for himself, so that we shall find the man who during the first three years of his rule had been so wise and balanced in his designs now compelled to see England everywhere lying in wait for him, from Vienna to Berlin, and from Cadiz to Moscow. Meanwhile, the profound irritation which the attitude of Great Britain had caused him for the past year had the effect of entirely changing his nature. He had been sincerely and ardently desirous of peace, but his good will had been spurned, and he would henceforward make this his constant excuse for waging war. He had believed that a treaty signed under the seal of honour would be respected ; but not only had it been violated, an attempt had also been made to cover it with ridicule ; that was enough ! Never again would he place his faith in treaties ! "So it is England who has forced us to conquer Europe," he informed London on the 20th of October, "and to create that *Empire of all the Gauls* which she holds up as a bogey before the eyes of Europe." And, indeed, from the rupture of the Peace of Amiens developed both the "Empire of all the Gauls" and "the conquest of

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Europe." Pandora's box, heavy with its load of evil, had been thrown open again, and with it "the Temple of Janus."

SOURCES. Works already mentioned by Aulard, Bailieu, Remâcle, and Boulay de la Meurthe (*Duc d'Enghien*). *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VIII. Letters already mentioned by le Coz and la Comtesse d'Albany. Fiévée, *Journal de Girardin*. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Fauriel, Cornet, General Bigarré, and General Decaen.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Sorel, Masson (*Famille*), E. Daudet, L. Madelin, Herriot, Gilbert A. Thierry, Aulard, Dejean, Lanzac de Laborie (IV, VI), Marion, and Driault. Masson, *Jadis*, I. Coquelle, *Napoléon et l'Angleterre*. Froidevaux, *La politique coloniale de Napoléon*. Saintoyant, *La Colonisation française pendant la période napoléonienne*.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

Public opinion and the rupture. Bonaparte prepares for "the invasion." He offers to enter into alliance with Prussia. The Tsar's insincere offer of mediation. The First Consul warns and intimidates Austria. England's one hope in face of the menace is the "disappearance" of Bonaparte. Georges Cadoudal in France. The revival of parties; their hopes centred in Moreau. Part played by England in the conspiracy. Georges' plan. Pichegru's rôle. Part played by the Bourbons. Georges and Pichegru in Paris; interviews with Moreau. Discovery of the conspiracy. Savary entrusted with the task of seizing the "prince" expected by Georges. Moreau's arrest; public opinion hostile to him. Pichegru's arrest followed by that of Georges. The First Consul's agitated state of mind; the Corsican vendetta. He had hoped to seize a Bourbon, which led him to arrest the Duc d'Enghien. The Prince's position; Talleyrand attracts the First Consul's attention to him. Designs of the old revolutionaries. The kidnapping and execution of the Duc d'Enghien. Popular emotion short-lived. Was the execution which was a "crime" also a "mistake"?

**F**RANCE and the whole of Europe were filled with the gravest anxiety, which was increased by England's attitude; from the very beginning she showed that she meant the conflict to be war to the death. Even before war was officially declared on the 16th of May, 1803, the English Government placed an embargo on all French ships in British ports, and organised a pursuit of those still at sea. Bonaparte had no intention of allowing this violation of the right of nations to pass unchallenged, and, in defiance of this same right, though really by way of reprisal, he had all British subjects then in France placed under arrest. On the 30th Floréal (the 19th of May) he informed the Assemblies of the rupture and communicated to them the stages by which it had been reached. The First Consul's statement was met with unanimous applause. Public opinion, moreover, was also up in arms against "Albion," and expressed its delight on being informed that Hanover, a state which was the hereditary possession of the English Crown, had been forthwith occupied by General Mortier and that the army defending it had

Public Opinion  
and the  
Rupture.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

been obliged to capitulate without firing a shot. The First Consul, while congratulating himself on the rapid success of this operation, announced, however, that he would not keep this trans-Rhenane conquest. He meant to use it as a bait for Prussian cupidity and by means of it induce the Berlin Government to enter into the formal alliance with France at which it had been shying for the last three years. For the time being, the public, exasperated with England, applauded this first "execution." But what gave rise to the greatest enthusiasm was the thought that the idea of invasion, abandoned after the peace preliminaries in London, was about to be revived.

Bonaparte  
Prepares  
for the  
Invasion.

And Bonaparte had indeed reverted to his grand scheme ; a week after the rupture arrangements had already been made to put it into execution. In all the ports work had begun ; the Admirals of the fleet were instructed to consider the best means for protecting the operation, while a huge camp was being formed round Boulogne, and five others along the coast, in which 480,000 men, destined for the expeditionary force, were to be collected. Before long the invasion became the sole topic of conversation in Paris. The almost universal outburst of enthusiasm expressed itself in practical results ; General and Municipal Councils, corporations and private persons all subscribed large sums towards the arming of the fleet. Paris made the Government a present of 120 guns, Lyons of 100 and Bordeaux of 80 ; even the Institute raised a subscription of 6,000 livres for the arming of a frigate. "The war," wrote one correspondent, "is definitely a national war."

This public approval, the result of the First Consul's policy for the last three years, was absolutely necessary to enable him to face the difficulties of the situation. He paid visits to the whole of the North Sea coast, studying every detail of the operations on the spot, and, according to a Royalist agent, inspiring the "wildest enthusiasm," above all in Belgium. He seemed to be in the throes of a kind of exultation, but this did not prevent him from keeping his head ; the letters dictated by him during this tour reveal him to have been, as it were, intoxicated with energy. And he returned to Paris looking as pleased as though he already had victory within his grasp.

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## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

In Brussels he had been visited by a Prussian emissary, with whom in the few hours at their disposal he had entered into a full discussion of the European situation.

He very rightly felt that England had not broken the peace without the support of some of her old allies, and that a coalition was in the air. But he counted on forestalling it. He wished, in

**Alliance with Spain** the first place, to make his position secure on the south, and Spain was obliged to resign herself to a closer alliance. The First Consul promised her part of Portugal, which was a regular British dependency and which the French and Spanish forces were to invade. In Italy he

**Tarentum Re-occupied.** re-occupied Tarentum and Otranto, not only because they were old plèdges which he required once more, but with the object of inspiring fear in the Kingdom of Naples. This was certainly necessary, for Queen Maria Carolina was, as a matter of fact, waiting with ill-concealed impatience for Austria to break the peace in order to fall upon the French, and was urging Vienna to act. She even went so far as to tell Alquier, the French Minister, that although Naples was not strong enough to attack France, she could be a match to set light to the conflagration. "May I venture to remind you, Madam," replied the witty diplomat, "that it is the fate of matches to be reduced to ashes before the fire breaks out." Meanwhile, this eager foe had to be held in check.

The case of Prussia, however, was different, and the First Consul's aim was to bind her to him. He accordingly made her a definite offer of Hanover, a tasty morsel for the suddenly awakened appetite of that country. But the King hesitated; he was afraid of incurring the displeasure of Europe and the undying hatred of England. He would have liked Russia to sanction this acceptance of stolen property, and hoped that the First Consul would come to an understanding with Alexander. And, as a matter of fact, Bonaparte did actually offer the Tsar the part of mediator, which the latter had apparently been wanting to be given for the last year. If Alexander, called upon to adjudicate between France and England, decided, in the name of a congress of the Powers, that Malta was to remain in the latter's hands, the First Consul undertook to give way. But, in his heart of hearts, he did



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not believe that the grandson of Catherine II would thus lightly install the English on the road to Constantinople. The "old Russian" party, however, which detested France of the Revolution, was inciting the Tsar against her. Moreover, his

**The Tsar  
Accepts  
Position of  
Mediator.** jealousy of the First Consul had in no way diminished. He accepted the office of mediator, but the secret documents of the day, the contents of which we now know, prove that it was his

intention to do a bad turn to the very man who had elected to abide by his judgment. His attitude was such that it was impossible for England to remain long in doubt regarding his intentions. But mistrusting the Tsar's private views on the subject of the Mediterranean, and certain that she would not alienate Russia by so doing, she refused to submit to arbitration. And, profiting by the fact that the door had now been opened to negotiations, she offered to enter into an alliance with Russia which she would finance, as was her custom, by means of large subsidies.

The coalition now seemed almost inevitable and the First Consul guessed as much. The most important point for him was still to paralyse Austria by entering into an alliance with Prussia. But the latter, with her eyes turned to St. Petersburg, insisted on maintaining her attitude of "vacillating neutrality." The fact of the matter was that the Tsar's hostility to France was as clear to Berlin as it was to London. He had informed the First Consul of England's refusal, but, pretending that he was still ready to continue his efforts at mediation, he communicated to him what the basis of it would be. His proposal seemed indeed a sorry jest. France was called upon to make all the sacrifices. She was to give up Holland, Switzerland and Italy, whilst England's ambitions were to be restrained only where they came into conflict with Russian interests. It demanded more of France than Lord Whitworth himself had asked for—"an extremely one-sided plan of conciliation," wrote Talleyrand. Whereupon, Markoff, who had always been hostile to France, proceeded to spread all kinds of perfidious rumours through Parisian society. His master, he declared, had offered the means for securing peace, but the First Consul had refused to listen. At the end of a month Bonaparte's patience was exhausted, and on the 30th of September, after a

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

violent scene with the Russian Ambassador, he demanded his recall. The Tsar consented, but covered him with honours. He was already moving in the direction of an alliance with England, and was trying to drag Prussia and Austria in his wake.

The First Consul wished to warn Europe. At the time of the Brussels interview he had mentioned the invasion of England to Lombard, the King of Prussia's Secretary, describing it not as a plan of his own, but as an inevitable necessity, the consequences of which would be terrible for everybody. "I wish Russia and Prussia would save me from this cruel necessity by laying down the law to me; but they must also lay down the law to England." And, having attempted to frighten Europe in this way, he continued to make active preparations for the famous "invasion." But he required a year's breathing-space in which to complete his designs. Meanwhile Pitt, who had returned to power in England,

**Pitt  
Returns to  
Power.**

was endeavouring to gather up the strings of European policy which were still at a loose end. Alexander, urged on by him, was making open advances to Berlin. But Frederick William was still manœuvring to get all he could out of everybody. He was dying to accept Hanover from the hands of France, a right royal morsel! But he also wanted the authorisation of Russia for the transfer, and, to crown all, the secret consent of England herself. Whereupon Austria, having expressed a wish to have the whole question of the remoulding of Germany raised once more, Prussia found herself thrown back into the arms of France and seemed ready to enter into an alliance. The First Consul, now feeling he could place more reliance on Prussia's neutrality, addressed a stern warning to Austria on the 3rd of March, on the subject of what he rightly regarded as a suspicious movement of troops. Austria did not conceal her terror at the extremely menacing tone he had adopted and the movements of troops ceased forthwith. From this Bonaparte drew the conclusion that he would not be attacked in less than twelve months' time. "In view of the present situation in Europe," he wrote on the 14th of March, "my whole concern is with England."

He therefore eagerly hurried on the preparations for invasion, though ever since the summer of 1803 the works connected with it had never ceased to buzz with activity. He superintended

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

the arrangements himself and allowed his mind no rest in this connection. Never, in the whole of his correspondence, does he betray a greater interest in any one object. He again visited Boulogne, where he found that "everything was beginning to look formidable." And he succeeded in creating about him an ever-growing confidence in the success of the plan. "The public as well as the soldier is beginning to grow accustomed to the idea of an invasion," wrote a certain Royalist agent on the 12th of October. During the summer of 1803 England, who had hitherto pretended to scoff at the enterprise, began to show signs of alarm, while in the bosom of the Cabinet Pitt once more reverted to the idea, so dear to the heart of the British Government between 1793 and 1802, that, since a coalition was proving so difficult to create, another form of diversion might perhaps be considered—a revolution in Paris, for instance, preceded or followed by the assassination of the man who was a nightmare to him. And in the autumn all the secret preparations were made to do away with Bonaparte, if necessary by means of an ambuscade on the high road.

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On the 20th of August, 1803, a frigate, the *Vincejo*, commanded by an Englishman, Captain Wright, sailed up during the night and cast anchor off the beach at Biville in Normandy. A boat put out which conveyed five men to the foot of the cliffs, which were three hundred feet high at this spot. They scaled them by means of a knotted rope thrown down to them by confederates from above. Taking shelter during the day in quarters ready prepared for them, they reached the suburbs of Paris and went into hiding. Régnier, the Chief Judge, who had been put in charge of the Police on the suppression of the Ministry, would have been thunderstruck had he been told that Georges Cadoudal, the most dangerous of the Chouans, had reached Paris in this way. But what seems almost incredible is that five months later, in January, 1804, nobody in high places had the smallest suspicion that, ever since the summer of 1803, this redoubtable personage had been walking about freely

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

in the capital, that he used to leave it in order to fetch fresh gangs of workers from the coast, and later on persons of importance, that he used to visit various people in Paris, that he approached Generals and perhaps even Senators—in short, that the most formidable of conspiracies was being audaciously hatched.

The fact of the matter was that, since the abolition of the Ministry, the police department, now once more attached to the Ministry of Justice, had become extremely slack, not to say entirely disorganised. When, at the end of May, war with England had broken out again, Bonaparte had considered the advisability of reviving this formidable Ministry, but had given up the idea because he did not wish to recall Fouché. But the renewal of the war had, as I have already pointed out, greatly perturbed public opinion and, although it was almost unanimous in its condemnation of England, there were many signs of discontent due to all manner of troubles and anxieties big with fate.

It was only natural that opposition in all its various shapes and forms should immediately revive. As a matter of fact, it did so with the utmost caution, sometimes with the most extraordinary secrecy. Even in the close vicinity of the Consul Bonaparte's Secret Foes. himself there existed a little group of enemies, mysterious and treacherous, the "Friends of England" as they signed themselves, whose secret has been partially revealed to us by Léonce Pingaud. Not content with keeping London informed, through the agency of the Comte d'Antraigues, of all that was being discussed or arranged in the Tuileries, they carried on treacherous intrigues at home, and laid traps into which they hoped Bonaparte would fall. And, strangely enough, Napoleon was always to remain in ignorance of the fact that these men and women, who had access to his own room and were even acquainted with certain secrets of his private domestic life, and whom he undoubtedly regarded as faithful friends, were carrying on their base activities and plotting to compass his ruin throughout the whole of his reign.

Even during the months of peace the military party had not ceased to make its presence felt by means of the most violent resolutions. No sooner had Bernadotte escaped the consequences of the "libel plot" than he returned to his old reckless tricks; in order to dazzle Juliette Récamier he gave her the names of

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

twenty Generals who, he declared, were devoted to him and ready to restore "the true Republic." Their hopes were still centred in Moreau. The resolutions put forward by this extremely

**Moreau the** cautious individual had become so acrimonious  
**Centre of** that at one dinner "many of the more peaceable  
**Disaffection** guests were terrified." Delighted at seeing so great a soldier compromising himself, all the parties had their eyes fixed on him, and began to feel their way with him. But he was a coward at heart, and, unlike Bonaparte, a feeble dilettante, who by his brutal outbursts encouraged the most violent language, but who backed out as soon as he was asked to raise a finger. Proud and haughty, he longed for power, but would have liked to have had it handed to him on a silver platter, and though incapable of action, he was nevertheless ready to lend an ear to the most outrageous suggestions.

The Royalist party were anxious to enlist the services of this soldier, who was still regarded as a Republican. But they were frankly disappointed. As soon as the peace was broken, they had hoped to rouse the western provinces once more to rebellion; but even the requisitions for the Army did not lead to any unrest either in the west or the south, while Alsace, where an attempt had been made to create disturbances, also remained quiet. The Royalists, disappointed in their hopes, proceeded to indulge in dreams of a different nature—the wildest and most fantastic dreams.

It may well be imagined that in this atmosphere active conspirators had not much difficulty in securing, if not support, at least an attitude of benevolent neutrality, more especially as the police were apparently quite blind.

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England, at all events, was not slow to reach this conclusion. Though their accounts were somewhat exaggerated, her famous "friends" in the Tuileries kept her duly informed of all that was

**England's** going on, and she hoped to encourage the various  
**Part in the** discontented elements and give substance to the  
**Conspiracy.** unco-ordinated intrigues that were afoot. Bonaparte's plans were beginning to inspire her with considerable apprehension. Hitherto, London had made fun of

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

little "Boney," but she was now getting thoroughly frightened. He must be got rid of at all costs. Should the plot be discovered, England would wash her hands of it. Woronzoff, the Russian Ambassador in London, even had the audacity to write that she had been entirely ignorant of the whole matter. But he forgot that it was he himself who, on the 6th of September, 1803, had arranged an interview between Lord Hawkesbury and Pichegru, who was destined to play such an important part, and he was certainly not ignorant of the fact that it was with English money in his pockets and in an English boat that Cadoudal succeeded in entering France. He may perhaps not have been aware that Drake and Taylor, English agents in Germany, had been instructed to do all they could to encourage intrigues on the French frontier, though, as a matter of fact, all this was well known, since, as early as the 30th of August, 1803, Jacobi, a Prussian agent, had already sent complaints to Berlin that the British Government "had reverted to the dangerous policy of fostering counter-revolution in France," and, on the 18th of October, had reported that not only the Comte d'Artois, but also Pichegru and Dumouriez had been seen in the company of the King of England at a review. The "friend" wrote quite calmly to d'Antraigues that "England's object was to get rid of Bonaparte and to make peace with the new Government." As a matter of fact, Georges Cadoudal did actually offer his services spontaneously, but, far from repulsing him, England lent him every encouragement. The Ministers who received him might, at a pinch, have declared that they were under the impression that it was a *coup d'état* and not murder at which he was aiming. But it would have required considerable simple-mindedness on their part—and when has the British Cabinet ever been simple-minded?—to believe that a *coup d'état*, arranged by such a brutal creature as Georges, could possibly be carried out without murder. Be this as it may, the Ministers gave him a wonderful reception. Lord Wyndham was even of opinion that although this "Goliath" looked and behaved like a rustic clown, he nevertheless possessed the natural ease and assurance which were the mark of a superior spirit.

Cadoudal, therefore, set to work once more to mature the plans for the carrying out of the "essential blow" he had had so close at heart for the last three years. He was living in London, the

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centre of a group of Vendéan "bullies," on whose help he relied.

**Cadoudal's Plan.** His plan was to lie in wait on the Saint Cloud or the Malmaison road, along which the First Consul

frequently travelled with an extremely small escort, and with his Chouans fall upon it, shoot and put it to flight, and then seize Bonaparte and send him bound hand and foot to England. Cadoudal always maintained that he would have had recourse to murder only if circumstances demanded it, but he also confessed that he would have had no scruples in despatching his quarry if he showed signs of resistance, which was only to be expected of the hero of the Bridge of Arcole. As soon as Bonaparte had been seized, or more probably killed, the King was to have been proclaimed; but for this latter operation something more than the help of the Chouans was required. "The banner will no longer bear the inscription, *Down with the Revolution!* but *Union of Revolutionaries and Royalists!*" wrote the head of the *Sûreté Desmarest*, who had questioned Cadoudal. It was hoped, by means of this slogan, to secure the support of those Generals and Senators who were reputed to be Republicans. At the trial, the name of Moreau alone was mentioned, but if what the Comte d'Artois said in a letter written to the Prince de Condé after the discovery of the plot is true, "other Generals" had also been approached. The well-informed "friend" mentions twenty-three Senators, and Generals like Lecourbe, Macdonald, Suchet and Dessoles. As a matter of fact, Moreau was quite enough, his name being regarded as sufficient to attract the others, and, as soon as the King was proclaimed, to make everybody rally to the support of Louis XVIII. The idea was not so fantastic as might be thought; in France, as we shall see when we come to 1814, loyalty to a cause rarely survives the *fait accompli*, and these famous "twenty-three Senators" will certainly be found among those who, in that year, proclaimed the downfall of Napoleon and the accession of Louis XVIII. But Moreau, hesitating, timorous and mistrustful, was still regarded by others as well as by himself as a Republican; and in the autumn of 1803 the great soldier of the Rhine army would never have had anything to do with a Chouan. An intermediary had accordingly to be found. It was the British Cabinet who discovered him and brought him into touch with Cadoudal. The man in question was no less a per-

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sonage than ex-General Pichegru.

Pichegru had also been a Republican ; he was the conqueror of Holland, and had been regarded as one of the great soldiers of the Revolution. It was known that, in 1795, he had been approached by Condé's agents with a view to securing his support for the restoration of the monarchy, that he had listened to the proposals, and, what was even more serious, had betrayed his trust and arrested the advance of his army, thus deliberately bringing about the failure of the Rhine campaign of the year III. Moreau, on being informed of the treachery of the comrade he loved, had been obliged to denounce him, but had been so half-hearted in his indictment that Pichegru had merely been cashiered, instead of being sent to the gallows as he deserved. He had always remained affectionately grateful to Moreau for this, whilst the latter, as was only natural, still felt friendly towards the man he had saved. There had been more than one proof of this since 1801. As early as the spring of 1803, a certain Abbé David had been arrested at Calais on his way to London ; he was acting as go-between for Moreau and Pichegru and conveying their correspondence. David, whom the police had either terrified or bought, had been set free, and apparently, from that time forward, played the somewhat unsavoury part of *agent provocateur*. Apparently, too, an ex-Jacobin, a certain Méhée de la Touche, played a similar rôle in trying to rouse false hopes in the breasts of the exiled Princes of an alliance with Republicans in high places. From all this Pichegru might have derived the impression that, as he was still *persona grata* with Moreau, he might find accomplices among his old revolutionary brethren.

Accordingly, in May, 1803, Pichegru suddenly became a valuable asset. He had sent, as emissary to Moreau, his own old aide-de-camp, Lajolais, who, after having seen the General, returned with a favourable report. It was then decided that the intrigue should be pushed a step further and that Pichegru himself should join Cadoudal in Paris and endeavour to get the old Chouan leader into touch with the victor of Hohenlinden.

The exiled Princes did not all play an equal part in the conspiracy which was to restore the throne to them. Louis XVIII, on being informed of the plans and asked for his approval, as usual evaded the issue as

Part Played by  
the Bourbons.



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befitted a man of parts by quoting a few lines from his beloved classics. The only answer he gave was to murmur the following words from Racine's *Mithridate* :

. . . *Et pour être approuvés*  
*De semblables desseins veulent être achevés*<sup>1</sup>.

In his heart of hearts he regarded the whole proceeding as senseless and showed it. The Comte d'Artois, however, with his usual impetuosity, threw himself heart and soul into the affair. Georges considered it essential that, when Bonaparte was overthrown, there should be some Prince of the Royal House actually in Paris ready to seize the Crown, and the Comte d'Artois had promised to take his turn at scaling the cliff at Biville. Thus, it would be by means of a knotted rope that the grandson of Louis XIV was to return to the throne of his fathers.

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On embarking at Biville, Cadoudal made his way to Paris, where he took refuge in a hiding-place at Chaillot, prepared for the reception of thirty men. Here he had with him his servant, the old Chouan Picot, Querelle, who had once been a surgeon in the Vendéan army, and two officers of that same body, De Sol de Grisolle, and Bouvet de Lozier. Georges, not content with boldly moving about Paris in search of accomplices, even had the audacity to go to Biville to receive fresh recruits. In January, 1804, he met Pichegru in this way, as well as the Marquis de Rivière and the Polignacs, favourites of the Comte d'Artois. He could not conceal from them that he had been disappointed in his expectations, declaring that for the last three months the discontent of certain groups and, above all, the influence of the Royalist party had been grossly exaggerated in London. He now placed all his hopes in Pichegru's interviews with Moreau and, above all, in the arrival of the Comte d'Artois, whose presence, he assured them, would make the dying embers of Royalist feeling burst into flame once more. On receiving the new arrivals in the middle of the night at Biville, Georges anxiously enquired: "Is the Prince with you?" "No!" was the reply. He shuddered. "Then we are done for!" he exclaimed.

<sup>1</sup>To be approved such designs first demand achievement.

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

As a matter of fact, it was their own imprudence that had done for them. Querelle, for instance, had been foolish enough to write to his family in Morbihan from Paris. The letter had been seized as early as the end of September, and on the 12th of October the Chief Judge had had the surgeon arrested, but regarding him as a Chouan of no importance, a miserable creature who had ventured all by himself to Paris, Régnier had left him in prison without even having had him questioned.

Meanwhile, on the 28th of January, Pichegru had had an interview with Moreau. But he too had been disappointed ; the

Pichegru's  
Interview  
with  
Moreau.

General refused to be used as an instrument for the restoration of the Bourbons and, furthermore, he considered such a thing impossible. In the course of a further interview he suggested, with charming simplicity, that he himself should be placed at the head of the Government with the title of dictator, and that all the Royalists would have to do would be to act as his collaborators and soldiers. On the 6th of February, Pichegru endeavoured to introduce Cadoudal to Moreau. The latter, taken by surprise, seems at first to have made a violent gesture of disgust ; but he was obliged to control himself and grant the interview, for Georges, in whose presence the old commander of the Rhine Army no doubt renewed his declarations, left the room in a fury, exclaiming : " Apparently, that blackguard is also ambitious ! Well ! I'll give him tit for tat. I prefer the fellow who's there to that — ! "

Moreau referred to this interview as providing proof that he had never aided and abetted the Royalist plot. But he had none the less been guilty of a grave misdemeanour. The evidence showed that although he may have regarded the proposed revolution as having been engineered for his own benefit and not for that of the Bourbons, he had also undoubtedly admitted that the first step towards its accomplishment should be the " disappearance "—this was the word used—of Bonaparte. But he knew the terrible Georges well enough to be aware what form this " disappearance " was likely to take.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although the police were still blind to what was going on, the

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

First Consul was led by some strange instinct to feel that there was something in the air. Through his private police, he had doubtless been informed of other intrigues, and soon afterwards, when the

### The Conspiracy Discovered.

conspiracy had been discovered, he led Réal to understand that he was in possession of grave facts which he intended to keep to himself. One day he learnt, almost by accident, that Régnier had had two refractory Vendéans, Querelle and De Sol de Grisolle, who had also been arrested, under lock and key for the last three months. What had they come to Paris for? He gave orders for them to be court-martialled. On the 26th of January, Querelle was condemned to death, and, in order to save his life, offered to reveal what he knew, and declared that Cadoudal and other notorious Chouans were in Paris. Desmarest, who was the recipient of this confession, hastened to the Tuileries with the information. The Consul was terribly upset and at last mistrustful of Régnier's police intelligence department, he placed the investigation of the matter in the hands of Réal, the Councillor of State, who had specialised in police matters. Querelle, examined this time by Réal, told the whole story of the landings at Biville. At this point, however, even graver matters came to light. On the 9th of February, Bouvet de Lozier was arrested, but Réal could get nothing out of him. His victim, however, feeling that he was destined for the gallows, tried to hang himself in his cell. He was cut down just as he was at his last gasp, and in an appalling brain-storm confessed everything. And this "everything" was terrible indeed! He revealed that Pichegru was with Georges Cadoudal, that a Prince was shortly expected, and lastly—a fact which gave rise to even greater commotion—that Pichegru had been having interviews with Moreau.

Réal presented himself post-haste at the Tuileries and revealed what he had just heard to Bonaparte. For a moment the First Consul appeared distressed beyond measure, but he soon recovered his composure. "Ah!" he observed, "now I understand a good many things! I have already told you that you did not know a quarter of what was going on. Even now you do not know all, but I am not going to tell you any more." The Consul was evidently determined to leave people in ignorance of what he himself knew regarding conspirators of high rank. Moreau

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

would be formally charged and would pay the penalty for the others. And yet ?

One important question remained to be solved. A Prince, it had been declared, was expected to disembark at Biville. General

**Savary**  
**sent to**  
**Biville.** Savary, the head of the special gendarmerie, was sent to the spot to catch him. The *Vincejo* appeared in the offing, but, at a signal given from the top of the cliff, did not put in to shore ; furthermore, she had no Prince on board. In any case, the trap had apparently failed, and Savary had waited in vain for six weeks on the top of the cliff.

Meanwhile, an active search was made in Paris for Cadoudal and his band, together with Pichegru and the Polignacs. The gates were closed, and the astonished capital was making all manner of conjectures, when, to the general stupefaction, Moreau was arrested on the 16th of February.

Bonaparte decided upon this arrest only with the utmost reluctance. He did not like Moreau, but he had a profound respect for him, and could not bring himself to believe that he could be capable of such a felony. " It took me three days to believe it," he afterwards wrote. And he spoke the truth. In his grief and anxiety, he held a private consultation with the two other Consuls, a few of his Ministers and Fouché, who had obviously risen in the First Consul's estimation through the failings of those who had taken his place. The council pronounced in favour of the immediate arrest of Moreau, who might at any moment be warned and seek safety in flight. But proof is not lacking to show that Bonaparte, regarding his conduct as having been due to aberration rather than to criminal intent, meditated pardoning him as soon as he had been induced to confess his

**Moreau**  
**Arrested.** guilt. The General having been arrested on the 16th of February, Bonaparte instructed the Chief Judge to extract this confession from him. But

Moreau, whose vanity proved a bad counsellor, denied everything, declaring that he had never seen either Cadoudal or Pichegru, and that he had not the smallest inkling of the conspiracy. Fauriel, who is so favourably disposed towards him, can only deplore this lack of candour on his part. In any case, the First Consul was deeply depressed by his attitude. " Oh, well," he declared,

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

"since he will not open his mouth to me, he will have to open it in a court of law." But he refused to follow up Moreau's arrest by any further measures, and while certain Generals and "Republican" Senators were doubtless terrified out of their wits, he insisted that they should be left alone. Besides, it was necessary that the conspiracy should not be deprived of its Royalist complexion.

\* \* \* \* \*

The people, on being given full details of the conspiracy, apparently lost their heads. "Public opinion has been shaken as though by an earthquake," wrote one foreign diplomat. But the impression produced in Paris was not so favourable to the Government. Those belonging to the Consul's immediate environment, including, no doubt, those who were more or less compromised, were wild with indignation and, together with the inhabitants of the suburbs, expressed their fury against the Chouans and demanded the infliction of a "terrible punishment." But the majority of people, even outside the ranks of those hostile to the *régime* and to the First Consul, showed signs of opposition. They refused to believe in the guilt of Moreau, the purest of the pure, and from this to the supposition that Bonaparte had invented the conspiracy with the object of ruining his rival was but a step; soon this accusation was repeated at every turn. People observed with a sneer that it was all very fine, but that neither Cadoudal nor Pichegru was forthcoming, and that doubtless they had never set foot in Paris. The salons seized hold of the "affair" and made the worst of it. "Do not enquire what the atmosphere here is like," wrote one fair supporter of the *régime*. "A vain, quarrelsome, ungrateful chatterbox—that is what the Parisian is!"

"No signs of Georges or of Pichegru," people were still remarking with a sneer on the 25th of February. But on the 26th

Pichegru was arrested. Taken by surprise in his hiding-place, he attempted to blow out his brains.

On the next day the two Polignacs and the Marquis de Rivière were also arrested and joined him in the Temple. All the leaders, except the elusive Georges, had been caught.

On being questioned, Pichegru, like Moreau, took refuge in

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

the most fantastic denials. He had never communicated with Moreau, he had never set eyes on Georges, "whom he did not know." Meanwhile, all Paris was engrossed in the hunt for Georges. A fugitive in the great city, he found all doors closed to him. On the 9th of March, as he was driving in a cab near the present Odéon, he was recognised by a police agent, who threw himself at the horse's head; the Chouan lent out and shot the man with a pistol, and jumping out tried to escape. He ran into two police officers who had hurried up, drew his dagger and tried to stab them. But a workman sprang on to the maniac and

Cadoudal  
Arrested.

disarmed him. Bound hand and foot, he was conveyed to the Temple. He said nothing which could in any way compromise either Moreau or

Pichegru, but haughtily avowed his own designs. It was impossible for the public any longer to regard the plot as an odious myth.

And, indeed, the arrests had the effect of putting a stop to the insulting incredulity of public opinion in Paris, though many still considered that the complicity of "the virtuous General Moreau" remained to be proved. Nevertheless, Siméon wrote to Thibaudau: "The interest at first aroused by Moreau . . . survives only among the enemies of the Government."

The indignation, which was now openly expressed, was increased by reports that came to hand regarding the complicity of England in the plot. The intrigues of English agents, more particularly of Drake in Munich and of the *émigré* Mussey, his correspondent in Offenburg, had just been discovered, and the Chief Judge, on hearing of their activities, allowed the news to be circulated. So the assassins were not only in the service of the Bourbons, but also in the pay of England! That Moreau should have had any sort of a hand in such machinations made the unfortunate man doubly odious in the eyes of the public.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nevertheless, all these events had made a painful impression even on the First Consul himself. He pretended to take them

Bonaparte  
Agitated.

calmly, but never had he been more deeply stirred, and far from recovering his composure after the conspiracy had been finally quashed, he was uneasy and irritable.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

He felt that he was surrounded by enemies and guessed that they were to be found not far from his own person. We know to-day that he was right. Moreover, he knew more or less for certain that important personages, upon whom he had heaped benefits, had been associated, if only to the extent of wishing it well, with the conspiracy the object of which had been his assassination. "Even members of the Government" were concerned, declared the "friend," who was in the know. Before anything had been discovered Bonaparte felt that "the air was full of daggers," to use Fouché's expression. As early as 1803 he had already told Joseph that he lived in a constant state of suspicion: "I am a target alike for the followers of the Bourbons and for the Jacobins," he declared. And the idea that, if he were to fall, his work, which was not yet completed, would be entirely destroyed, filled him with despair. "I told you that I required ten years," he observed to Roederer. "I have only just begun; nothing is finished yet!" And the little that had been done would fall to bits. It was this thought that excited him most and filled his heart with a secret and uncontrollable bitterness. And when, in his own circle, his wife, his brothers, or some of his real friends urged him to show moderation in the repressive measures he took, he was irritated by their interference. "Am I a dog," he exclaimed, "to be hounded down and killed in the street . . . while my murderers are to be regarded as sacrosanct?"

There was one fact which exasperated, not to say shocked, him beyond measure—it is necessary to insist on this in order to explain what follows—and this was the part played by the Bourbons in this regrettable incident, and which had been proved up to the hilt. In 1812 he remarked to Caulaincourt that, since the act of regicide in 1793 had not been his work, "the Bourbons had no right to conspire against his life." They "had no right!" It was a Corsican idea. A man had "a right" to kill the murderer of his father or his brother; but since Bonaparte had not killed a Bourbon, and the Bourbons, on the other hand, had conspired to have him assassinated, they had given him "a right" to kill them. And there gradually arose in his heart a terrible desire to show, by means of a dreadful example, that, since they were aiming at doing away with him, he would have an eye for an eye.

The  
Corsican  
Vendetta.

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

He had failed to seize the Duc d'Artois at Biville ; but the examination of certain parties seemed to point to the fact that some Prince at any rate had come to Paris. Rumour had it that the conspirators had been told at one of their secret gatherings that before arranging anything they ought to await the arrival of the Prince. This was mere talk ; but a Bourbon, a member of the House of Condé, probably the young Duc d'Enghien, was said to be on the spot. The First Consul had hoped to lay hands on a Prince to keep as a hostage, wrote Dalberg, the Baden representative. And lo and behold ! another report asserted that this same Duc

**The Duc d'Enghien.** d'Enghien, a most virulent enemy of the new France, an officer in the pay of England, had, from his residence at Ettenheim, quite close to the frontier, come several times, if not actually to Paris, at least to Strasbourg, and that quite recently he had been joined, at Ettenheim, by the traitor Dumouriez. Thus Condé's grandson was in the thick of this vast conspiracy ! Failing some other member of the family, he would be seized at Strasbourg, or, if necessary, at Ettenheim, and would pay the penalty for the whole lot. The anxiety, grief and rage which, for weeks past, had been torturing this scion of Corsica were to end in a terrible crime, which, as we shall see, was encouraged by a political intrigue of some magnitude.

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The Duc d'Enghien was in no way involved in the conspiracy that had just been discovered. He had always vehemently declared himself to be an enemy of revolutionary France, had in no way changed his attitude towards consular France, and was ready to make an armed entry into French territory. But, I repeat, he did not even know of Georges' plot. A noble-minded man, though he hated Bonaparte he could not conceal his admiration for him, and the idea of murdering him never once entered his head. The most that could be said against him was that in a letter dated the 23rd of September, 1803, he had expressed the hope that some "accident" might befall the First Consul, which would clear the way for the restoration of the King. When at Ettenheim he heard that a conspiracy had been discovered, he showed his irritation : " That's Pichegru again ! " he wrote. " Such methods are not to my liking."



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

As a matter of fact, it was quite enough for him to be one of the Princes who was most hostile to the new France for his presence at Ettenheim, so close to the Rhine, to be regarded as unbecoming. While at Offenburg, a band of rabid *émigrés*—friends of his—were nursing Alsace in his interests and with his consent, a man named Thumery had joined him. It was Thumery—pronounced with a German accent in the presence of some French agents—that had led them to believe and assert that “Dumouriez was with the Prince.” Bonaparte still sincerely believed this on the 12th of March.

As a matter of fact, until the 1st of March the First Consul had been ignorant of the fact that the Prince was at Ettenheim. It was Talleyrand who had informed him of it at the same time as he had divulged the activities of the Offenburg group; he had been led to do so, no doubt, by somewhat Machiavellian intentions. This shed a ray of light—false light, unfortunately—on the problems that were perplexing Bonaparte. The police maintained that the young Prince had attended the secret gatherings of the conspirators in Paris; he was informed that he had with him at Ettenheim a certain Colonel Smith, an Englishman, and the “miserable wretch Dumouriez”; and he fully believed that this grandson of Condé was hand in glove with Georges’ party. This filled him with rage and fury; but from this to having the Bourbon prince kidnapped on German soil and then shot was a far cry.

He consulted Talleyrand, Cambacérès, Fouché, and Murat, who had been made Governor of Paris. Talleyrand, though he was barefaced enough to deny it under the Restoration, was strongly in favour of the arrest. Once more convinced, as the result of recent information he had received, that he could never be reconciled with the Bourbons and foreseeing that the First Consul was about to don the purple, he

Talleyrand  
in Favour  
of  
Arresting  
the Duke.  
was by no means sorry to see the latter placing a blood-stained gulf between himself and the old Royal House of France. Fouché had even stronger reasons for supporting drastic action. Being a regicide himself, he was of opinion that the execution of a Bourbon would irrevocably throw the Consul, the future Emperor, into the arms of the “old revolutionaries.” Murat apparently supported him. Cambacérès alone tried to dissuade Bonaparte from

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

committing the crime and recommended him to stay his hand. "What are you talking about?" retorted Bonaparte. "I would have you know that I refuse to spare those who are sending out assassins against me."

He had made up his mind. Talleyrand undertook to stifle any protests on the part of the Elector of Baden, whose territory would have to be violated, as well as from the various European Governments, should they demand explanations. Fouché, for his part, had given the First Consul a glimpse of his reasons, which had struck the latter somewhat forcibly. The ex-Minister of Police was convinced that a new throne was about to be established, but a large number of old revolutionaries, high officials and Republican Generals would probably be opposed to it. If, however, the promotion of the First Consul to the rank of Emperor had been preceded by the execution of a Bourbon, all these people would unanimously give their support to a *régime* inaugurated under such auspices.

On the 10th of March, General Ordener was instructed to clear Offenbourg of its rabid *émigrés*. Caulaincourt, who was appointed his adjutant, was to be put in charge of this operation, while

**The Duke  
Arrested.**

Ordener was to leave Offenbourg and hasten with all speed to Ettenheim, in the near vicinity, surround the Prince's house, and during the night of the 14th to the 15th seize his person and his papers and convey him to the fortress of Strasbourg. Everything was carried out according to plan. The Prince, on being captured, spent the 16th and 17th at Strasbourg and was sent on to Paris during the night of the 17th to the 18th.

On the 19th his papers, which had been seized, were placed in the hands of the First Consul. They contained nothing whatever to show that the Duke had been in any way implicated in the conspiracy, though, on the other hand, they proved that he had insisted on serving with the English forces and was undoubtedly making preparations to enter Alsace with the Austrians, as soon as the latter decided to declare war. Thus, in the eyes of the First Consul, the Prince was a Frenchman caught bearing arms against his country.

The unfortunate Prince was taken to Vincennes, where a court martial was held in the evening. Apparently, with the object of

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

reviving revolutionary memories, it was presided over by General

**His Trial.** Hulin, an old member of the *garde française*, who

had joined the insurgents and helped to storm the Bastille. At midnight the prisoner was examined by the reporter. He asked to see the First Consul, but his request, proffered in the noblest possible manner, was refused. Later on Napoleon implied that he would have received him, and there is every reason for thinking that, after a scene *à la Cinna*, he would have spared him. An hour later the Prince appeared before his judges. He did not hesitate to defy them, and almost gloried in his desire to fight France and in the fact that he had received money from England. In these circumstances, there is nothing to show that the court did not return a verdict "in accordance with instructions." The Prince was condemned to be shot as "an *émigré* in the pay of England and bearing arms against France." Savary had been sent to Vincennes by Bonaparte to superintend the proceedings, and had been present at the deliberations. Savary was always the blindest and, therefore, the worst of servants. And on this occasion he showed, for the first time, what he was really worth. For the judges, moved to compassion by the youth and the reckless candour of the prisoner, had intended, as soon as sentence had been passed, to send a letter, a genuine recommendation to mercy, to the First Consul. But Savary, if we may believe Pasquier, though, as a matter of fact, the latter detested him, "snatched the pen from Hulin's fingers." "Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "you have done what you had to do; the rest is my business." And he took possession of the prisoner. It was through him that Condé's grandson was forthwith set up against the wall of the fortress, at three o'clock on the morning of the 21st of March, and shot.

**His Execution.**

The haste shown by this over-zealous *gendarme* in carrying out the disastrous sentence of death proved to have been contrary to the final decision extracted from Bonaparte by his intimates.

Throughout the evening of the 20th the First Consul had been at grips with them. Cambacérès had doggedly opposed him, but in vain! It was probably the only occasion on which this cautious individual displayed true courage. Josephine threw herself at her husband's feet, dragging down Hortense with her, while

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

Caroline Murat, on instructions from her husband, implored her brother to have mercy. His only reply was a stubborn silence. But a few minutes later he was heard to mutter some lines from Corneille and then from Voltaire dealing with the subject of pardon. He then sent instructions to Réal to have the Prince further examined before the sentence was carried out, with the object, he explained, of throwing light on certain aspects of the conspiracy which still remained obscure. Was this merely a pretext for delay with a view to eventual pardon? Réal, tired out by the hard work and anxiety of the last few days, had told his servants not to disturb him; such, at least, is the explanation given, though it is somewhat dubious. On waking at four o'clock in the morning, the order was apparently communicated to him, whereupon, torn with anxiety, he hastened with all speed to Vincennes. At the gate he met Savary, who informed him that all was over. "The First Consul will be furious!" exclaimed Réal. But apparently Bonaparte was not furious. Perhaps he really had been inclined to pardon the Prince, but, as we know, his execution was merely part of a complicated political move, and a man like Bonaparte was quite capable of having wished to postpone the execution and yet of being glad that it had taken place. There was always an element of fatalism in his attitude.

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The terrible news did not reach Paris until the afternoon of the 21st. Mademoiselle Contat, whom Pasquier went to visit in her box at the Théâtre Français, burst into tears as she told him what had happened. "Where can one go and hide?" she exclaimed. The tragic actress was talking somewhat theatrically. For there was no reason to suppose that Bonaparte contemplated subjecting her to a fate similar to that of the Duc d'Enghien. Nevertheless, her words did reflect a genuine feeling of terror which, for a moment, was mingled with that of horror and reprobation.

Bonaparte seemed to be moved rather than disquieted by this first outburst of public opinion. But he was not the man to shirk responsibility for his actions. "My blood is worth as much

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

as theirs," he observed to his own immediate circle; the phrase was reminiscent of the backwoods of Corsica. But, in his heart of hearts, he was probably

**Bonaparte's  
Attitude.**

tormented by doubt and regret, and insisted on

giving an explanation before the Council of State, where, according to Miot and Pelet, his speech was halting and strained and full of violent expressions—sure signs of profound distress. But he afterwards declared: "Although there was a great deal of gossip in Paris over the affair, I should do the same thing again if occasion arose"; and, as everybody knows, he repeated this at St. Helena and even in his will—a clear proof that for the rest of his life he was still trying to find an answer to the question raised by his conscience. This much at least is certain, that after the first impulse of rage, he had, with his usual relentless realism, regarded the affair as a political matter. The Corsican vendetta would doubtless have succumbed to Josephine's entreaties; but the arguments advanced by Talleyrand and Fouché had immediately captured him.

Moreover, inasmuch as it was merely a political matter, the case was to redound to his advantage, at least for the time being. The execution, while it had the effect of rallying wavering revolutionaries to his cause, alienated only a very small section of society.

**Chateaubriand.**

Chateaubriand, who had been offered the post of French Minister in Valais, but was hesitating about

accepting a position so far beneath him, made the case an excuse for refusing it. Later on he claimed that his action had been prompted by Roman virtue. But his letter is still in existence; in it he refers to Madame de Chateaubriand's health, and his language, very different from what was ascribed to him later on and even at the time itself, was full of respect and deference. Moreover, nobody understood him, and nobody followed him, at any rate later on. On the contrary, those who were on the point of rallying to the support of the *régime* drew a somewhat strange moral from the incident itself. Pasquier, who was anxious to secure a good position in the Council of State, wrote afterwards in all seriousness: "People certainly saw how dangerous it was to leave power in unworthy hands." Talleyrand, whose part in the tragedy was known to all, gave a large ball on the 24th, at which twenty members of the old nobility were present, and the representatives of all the Courts of Europe,

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YEAR XII

including those of Naples and Madrid, where Bourbons occupied the thrones. Public indignation, too, quickly subsided. A certain young aristocrat who, just after the execution, described the death of the Duc d'Enghien as a "public calamity," though adding that it had been forced upon Bonaparte by a handful of Jacobins, wrote three months later: "As a matter of fact, the storm has blown over," which, taken in conjunction with the rest of the letter, meant—it had all been hushed up.

As everybody agreed that the execution reconciled to the idea of the establishment of a new throne those revolutionaries who had hitherto been hostile, and as, moreover, according to Hortense, "all serious conspiracy was now at an end," the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, contrary to a well-known remark attributed to Fouché, certainly remained a "crime"—a political crime—but was not, from the political point of view, "a mistake." The Empire sprang from the ashes of this terrible deed quite as much as from the conspiracy that had served as the pretext for it.

**SOURCES.** Works already mentioned by Aulard (IV), Remâcle, Bailleu and Boulay de la Meurthe (*Enghien*). *Procès Pichegru-Moreau*. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VIII and IX. Letters already mentioned by Fiévée and Madame de Rémusat. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Thibaudeau, Madame de Chastenay, Roederer, Fauriel, Hyde de Neuville, Desmarest, Pasquier, Savary, Madame de Rémusat and Pingaud (*d'Antraigues*). *Mémoires de la reine Hortense*, I. Caulaincourt, *Souvenirs*, II. Guilhermy, *Papiers d'un émigré*. Madame de Staël, *Dix ans d'exil*. Pelet, *Opinions*.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel, Driault, Lanzac de Laborie, III, VI, Madelin, Marion, Coquelle, Holzhausen, Herriot, Pingaud (*Bernadotte*), G. A. Thierry, Picard, Masson (*Famille*, II), and Giraud. Lenotre, *Georges Cadoudal*. Huan de Penanster, *Une conspiration en l'an XI*. Welschinger, *Le Duc d'Enghien*. De Maricourt, *La mort du Duc d'Enghien*. Barbey, *La mort de Pichegru*. Martel, *La conjuration de Georges*.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

"We have given her an Emperor." General movement in favour of the restoration of a throne. Bonaparte's attitude. Reliance on the Senate's support; Fouché pulls the strings; the Assembly "invites the First Consul to complete his work." Bonaparte insists upon sounding the attitude of Europe. Europe and the execution of the Duc d'Ang-hien; the German Diet decides not to protest; all the Courts, except that of Russia, affect to be indifferent. Bonaparte sounds Berlin and Vienna on the subject of the imperial title. Question of the succession; the Bonaparte family and Josephine. Bonaparte insists upon reserving the right of appointing his heir; disputes with his family. The Curée motion in the Tribunate. The Senate proclaims Napoleon Bonaparte Emperor. The Senate's action at Saint Cloud. The Moreau-Cadoudal scandal; the assent of the Assemblies. The plebiscite of the year XII.

"**W**E have done more than we expected," sneered Georges in his prison cell. "We came here to give Paris a King, and we have given her an Emperor!" These words, if they are authentic, show that the brute courage of this

coarse creature was redeemed by a certain fine wit. "We have given her an Emperor." The idea of the Empire, which had been germinating for a year or more, burst forth all the stronger for the conspiracy that had failed. Ever since the summer of 1803 the word had been repeated on all sides.

Moreover, public opinion was obviously veering towards the restoration of some kind of monarchy. Every day the people

**The Public Favour a Monarchy.** were becoming less attached, if not to the principles, at all events to the memories of the Revolution, and when they did call them to mind, it was only to wish they could be wiped out. But, although

the Revolution was losing its hold on men's minds, they were far from willing to abandon the various conquests it had made, and it was precisely the need for safeguarding the latter that led a solid section of the bourgeoisie to dream of a monarchy set up on the foundations of these same conquests.

## THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

But the attitude of the old revolutionaries, the servants of the new system, the majority of whom were Republicans, was even more clearly defined, for on the eve of the foundation of the Life Consulship, the idea of the Empire had spontaneously occurred to them. As a proof of this we have only to turn to the confession of one of the old regicides: "The uncertainty of our fate," he wrote, "is constantly tormenting my mind. . . . The forthcoming elevation of the First Consul to the dignity of the imperial purple with hereditary rights will be the fulfilment of my wishes."

Moreover, a group of these old revolutionaries were lawyers, descendants of the men who for centuries, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere, had worked hard with the object of transforming the patriarchal rule of the House of Capet into a Roman *principium*. Men like Tronchet, Roederer, Boulay de la Meurthe, Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, Portalis, Treilhard, Merlin and a score of others, all legal lights brought up on Roman Law, were undoubtedly the spiritual scions of the great lawyers who, from the time of Philip the Fair to that of Louis XV, had sat at the King's Council Board. And Brumaire had given them their man, who, even more than a Francis I or a Louis XIV, would be the incarnation of the Caesar of whom twenty generations of Cæsarian lawyers had dreamed.

Some of these lawyers of the year XII had Cæsar Augustus in mind, while others dreamed of Charlemagne. Ever since 1800 a whole coterie, inspired chiefly by Fontanes, had been working for the restoration of some form of monarchy; their aim was certainly not to secure a solid bulwark for the Revolution, but to provide a definite chief for the order that had been restored. Old supporters of the Bourbons who had rallied round the new *régime*, they were endeavouring to establish the Government on a fresh basis, and not daring to urge a Bonaparte merely to step into the shoes of the Capets, they proceeded to unearth Charlemagne, the great Frankish warrior, whom a Pope had crowned Emperor. And thus Fontanes became the centre for all those who wished to regard the "detestable" upheavals of the Revolution as merely the prelude, designed by Providence, for the advent of a "fourth dynasty."

**The Clergy.** The clergy, a body who were whole-hearted believers in monarchy, lent them enthusiastic support. And thus it came about that the enemies of



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

the Revolution joined hands with its adherents in order to raise to the throne of Empire the man whom, for months past, almost the whole country had been urging towards it.

The people, above all, were in favour of the step. The description I have already given of popular feeling on the eve of the

foundation of the Life Consulship makes any

The People. further reference to the First Consul's popularity unnecessary. Public sentiment was already extremely favourable when the discovery of Cadoudal's conspiracy converted it into the wildest enthusiasm. As early as August, 1803, a Royalist agent, wishing to put the exiled Princes on their guard, had written : " The risks which Bonaparte runs will secure him not the hearts, but the suffrages of a large part of the nation." He was quite right. What Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angély wrote the day after the discovery of the conspiracy might have been the cry on the lips of all : " They wish to kill Bonaparte ; we must protect him and make him immortal ! " The belief in the mystic element of monarchy was still so strong that everybody felt that when once he had been clothed in royalty the man himself would be more sacrosanct, more inaccessible to the weapon of the assassin. Attempts on his life were to be deterred not only by placing him higher, but by founding on his behalf a hereditary monarchy which would deprive the advocates of disorder of any hope that in destroying Bonaparte himself they would also destroy the institutions he had founded. It was from this that the Empire was born.

And what did Bonaparte himself think of it all ? As soon as he had been made Consul for life he saw a throne looming before him. But he was still engaged in paving the way to it. The discovery of the conspiracy, however, had inspired him, too, with the desire to put an end to such machinations once and for all. " I was counting on keeping the Consulate for two years longer," he observed to Madame de Rémusat, " although it was a form of Government under which there was a hopeless incongruity between facts and phrases . . . But this conspiracy aimed at upsetting Europe ; so it was necessary to disillusion Europe and the Royalists. . . . I accordingly silenced both the Royalists and the Jacobins once and for all. . . . Liberty is a pretext. Equality is the darling of your hearts, and lo and behold ! the people are pleased to have as

## THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

their King a man chosen from the ranks of the Army!" But, even after the discovery of the conspiracy, he waited once again for his hand to be forced. Furthermore, his anxiety had been set at rest; for he saw that France was rushing towards him with an irresistible impulse to raise him higher than ever.

\* \* \* \* \*

As had been the case two years previously, the initiative could come only from the Senate. But the opposition, spurred on by the "Moreau scandal," threw the little strength that remained to them into the balance, at least in the lobbies of the Assembly. This made it necessary for public opinion to drag the Assembly in its wake.

The  
Senate.

And public opinion spoke with no uncertain voice. Addresses poured in. Not content with expressing their indignation at the conspiracy, they demanded an increase of power for the head of the State and a hereditary title—this was repeated again and again. The Army and Navy talked of proclaiming him Emperor, without further ado, in all the camps and fleets, while in Paris Murat was obliged to instruct his officers to "restrain" their men. At the bottom of the address sent by the Army in Paris were to be found the signatures of members of the High Command hitherto regarded as most hostile, more especially that of Bernadotte, who, in a state of abject terror ever since Moreau's arrest, burst out into loud protestations of horror at the conspiracy into which the latter had allowed himself to be inveigled. But Bonaparte did not wish the initiative to come from the Army, says Pelet de la Lozère; all he desired was to inspire fear in the Assemblies, and thus spur them on. Moreover, Electoral Colleges, Municipal Councils and Generals were also making their voices heard, and the Senate was merely waiting to be enlightened as to the part it was incumbent on it to play.

The Army  
and Navy.

Fouché undertook this task of enlightenment. Having partly paid, by the loss of his portfolio, for the somewhat disingenuous part he had played at the time when the Life Consulship had been conferred, he hoped to regain it by actively collaborating in the foundation of the Empire, more especially since, after the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, he had no reason to fear that any

Fouché  
pulls the  
strings.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

counter-revolutionary reaction would result. As a Senator, he had acquired considerable prestige at the Luxembourg. This he placed at the service of the First Consul, and, in a few days, the ground had been prepared by the hand of a master.

A few days previously the Upper House had been sent a number of documents, seized in Germany, which provided clear proof that the English agents Drake, Taylor and Spencer Smith had been connected with the conspiracy that had just been suppressed in Paris. Having been provided with all the information on the subject, the Senate was asked to express its opinion. A Commission was appointed; Fouché was a member of it and was destined to play an important part. He made it clear that the only answer the Senate could make was to give the man, whom the enemies of France and of the Revolution had tried to do away with, the power that the country was burning to bestow upon him. The Commission agreed with him, and the conclusions of its report were at one with him in spirit, although the word "Empire" was not pronounced, or even the word "monarchy," and it was left to the First Consul to choose for himself the form in which the wishes of the Senate should find expression.

On the 6th Germinal (the 27th of March), the Assembly, which had been convoked, met under the presidency of Cambacérès. By a huge majority it accorded a genuinely enthusiastic welcome to the conclusions of the Commission, and the First Consul was "invited to complete his work by making it as immortal as his glory." There were only three votes against the motion and two blank papers in the urn.

It now merely remained to communicate the result of the ballot to the First Consul, who pretended that he wished to be given time for reflection. As a matter of fact, having secured this preliminary manifestation, he intended to sound the attitude of the High Command of the Army and, above all, that of the rest of Europe. Soult, on being asked his opinion, guaranteed the unhesitating support of the Generals. And the diplomatic agents of France were already busy feeling their way with the countries to which they were accredited.

\* \* \* \* \*

As a matter of fact, after the scandal caused by the death of the

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Duc d'Enghien, this was a somewhat hazardous proceeding. At first the diplomatic corps in Paris had, as we know, shown the liveliest indignation, and had unanimously, or almost unanimously, declared that "this meant war." Had not the French Government violated the territory of the German Empire? And from Vienna to St. Petersburg it was hoped that the Elector of Baden and the Diet would protest, not to mention the Tsar, who was regarded as the protector of Teutonic liberty.

In reality, however, the execution had inspired annoyance rather than indignation abroad. Those countries which were making preparations to fight France were not yet ready, while those which were trying to conciliate her could not entertain the idea of embarking, *ab irato*, on a somewhat dubious enterprise.

Even the Tsar found himself in an extremely embarrassing position. On receiving news of the "murder," those about him did not hesitate openly to express their abhorrence. An immediate declaration of war against "the tiger who was ruling France" was even discussed. Alexander endeavoured to rouse the German States and, meanwhile, as a sign of general indignation, he ordered the Russian Court to go into mourning for the Duc d'Enghien and demanded explanations from Paris. But to take up arms was a different matter and required reflection. In the first place, it was necessary to secure allies. And he wrote to Berlin and Vienna.

Vienna, without beating about the bush, replied that as the country was in no way prepared for war, it "was afraid of Bonaparte." Moreover, it disapproved of Georges' conspiracy; and Champagny, the French Ambassador, was able to write home saying that "wise men were well aware that a whole country menaced in the person of its ruler would have been justified in taking even more drastic measures." In any case, the Austrian Cabinet took refuge in silence. "They were afraid."

The King of Prussia refused the Tsar's overtures even more frankly. Queen Louisa, the sworn foe of Bonaparte, had insisted

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on mourning being worn ; the order to do so had been given, and then, on further mature reflexion, rescinded. Prussia's Attitude. Russia, remarked Hardenberg, was a long way from France ; " people there could afford to be sentimental, with Prussia acting as a buffer." Berlin was in the middle of negotiating with Paris for the cession of Hanover ; to offend the First Consul would have meant renouncing her claim. After all, what did the execution of a Bourbon matter to a Prussian compared with the possibility of laying hands on such a choice morsel ? The blood of the unfortunate little princeling was not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier !

With reference to the violation of German territory, Vienna and Berlin called upon the Elector of Baden to demand explanations, and the Diet to support him in so doing. The Attitude of the Diet. latter declared it would wait until the former had laid his protest before it. But the Prince, having addressed a letter couched in the most reproachful terms to the consular Government, refused to do anything further, and on being urged by the Diet to protest more energetically, he declared that he was determined to keep friendly with France.

But this was by no means all. In Florence, Naples and Madrid Bourbons were installed on the throne, but none of these Courts went into mourning, as would have been Indifference of the Bourbons. only natural. Beurnonville, the French Ambassador in Madrid, even wrote saying that nobody seemed to care ; while Godoy, an extremely vulgar person, remarked with a sneer that " in a case of bad blood the only thing to be done was to let it."

In fact, Europe, though more or less moved, took care to hide its feelings, and the Tsar found that he had rattled his sword in vain.

Bonaparte wrote pointing out that this young monarch had placed himself in a somewhat ridiculous position " in wearing mourning for the Rebukes the Tsar. Duc d'Enghien, although he was not bound to him

by any ties whatsoever, while not a single family connected with the Bourbons had followed his example." The blunt demand for an explanation which Alexander had addressed to Paris was met by a cruel rejoinder : " If, when England was planning the assassination of Paul I," was Talleyrand's reply to

## THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

the Russian Chancellery, "the authors of the plot had been known to be lurking at a stone's throw from the frontier, would they not have been seized with all possible speed?" This straight blow rudely aimed at the head of the virtuous Alexander, who had heaped favours on his father's assassins, once and for all shut the mouth of the only Sovereign who had dared to protest.

But the utmost that the other Powers had done was to refrain from lodging a protest, and to ask them, thereupon, to recognise the enthronement of "the tiger" before it had actually taken place, was, I repeat, somewhat of a tall order. But Bonaparte very rightly guessed that the reasons which had dictated silence would also force compliance. He did not address himself to the Tsar, but before approaching any of the other Courts of Europe, turned to Berlin and Vienna.

Bonaparte  
Sounds  
Berlin and  
Vienna.

Berlin had for some time been trying to avoid a formal alliance, which made it seem all the more advisable to display the utmost friendliness. The recognition of the proposed imperial title for Bonaparte might mean the cession of Hanover without any obligation to enter into an alliance with France. Frederick William accordingly declared that "he was ready, as soon as the matter had been settled, to recognise the restoration of monarchical Government in France in the person of a man whose wisdom and great achievements entitled him to the honour."

The Austrian Government was inspired by different motives. Menaced, as the result of the Imperial Recess, with losing the imperial title together with the elective right to the German Crown, the House of Habsburg was endeavouring to create a new title for itself, that of "hereditary Emperor of Austria." But this too would have to be recognised by Europe, and first and foremost by France. Thus it was a case of give and take.

As Berlin and Vienna agreed almost with alacrity to the foundation of the new French Empire, it was useless to make any further enquiries. The rest of Europe would follow their example, and in France matters could now safely be left in the hands of Fate.

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The First Consul had allowed the matter to mature and had seen only advantages in delay. And, indeed, problems of some

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

complexity were still awaiting solution, more particularly the question of a dynasty.

Bonaparte, it will be remembered, had refused, and then in 1802 had consented, to accept the right of nominating his own successor. But the institution of a strictly hereditary monarchy would deprive him of this privilege, for his successor would be imposed upon him as well as upon the country. His family certainly regarded the matter in this light. They became

**Question  
of his  
Succession.**

extremely excited, and fierce intrigues were set on foot. As the future Emperor still had no children, the succession could only be secured to his brothers, unless he consented to a divorce. Such

was the family's hatred of Josephine, however, that it almost surpassed their own ambition, and a campaign in favour of divorce was inaugurated. Bonaparte did not wish for a divorce, but neither did he wish the throne he was about to ascend to be secured in the future to one of his brothers.

His secret desire was not to be bound any more than he had been at the time when he was appointed Consul for life. He wished to be free to adopt a successor. He already knew whom he would adopt—it would be the little Napoleon, the son of Louis and Hortense, who was then eighteen months old. But when he opened his heart to the child's father, the latter was up in arms, and ignoring the interests of his son, insisted on his own and the family's rights. For three months all these Bonapartes had done nothing but talk of "their rights." Napoleon was occasionally amused by it. "To judge by the claims my brothers are advancing," he observed in 1812 to Caulaincourt, "one would think they were in a position to say, 'The King, our father!'" Even as early as 1804 he had exclaimed, "One would think that I was depriving them of the heritage of the late King, our father!" But he grew irritated only when they endeavoured to persuade him to divorce Josephine. Never had the idea been further from his mind. At the moment when his fortunes were to be crowned, he felt, as a matter of fact, a renewal of tenderness for the woman who had been so strangely associated with them, and, moreover, public opinion shared in his deep feeling for her. And if he was particularly enamoured of the prospect of having Louis' son as his heir, it was because, through his mother, the child was

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Josephine's grandson. Adoption, moreover, spared him the necessity for divorce. But he would have liked to obtain the consent of his family. Joseph, however, on being consulted, was up in arms, as Louis had been. "What had he done to be deprived of the right which, as the eldest brother, he had to the Crown?" Lucien supported him in bringing pressure to bear on Louis, who, more tartly than ever, refused to be "dispossessed" by his son.

Bonaparte referred the matter to the Council of State. But Joseph had a large following there, and the majority of the Council declared themselves in favour of the hereditary principle, even in the collateral branch. This did not settle the matter, however, for the future Emperor was not the man to inaugurate his new position by allowing himself to be outmanœuvred, even, nay, least of all, by his own family. But a decision had to be reached at once, for all the reports agreed in saying that the country was vociferously demanding a settlement.

On the 5th Floréal (the 25th of April) Bonaparte decided to reply to the request made by the Senate a month previously. As we know, it had been couched in somewhat vague terms. The Assembly was invited by the First Consul to "let him know what they really thought." There was not much doubt about this, but it was deemed advisable that when the moment came for putting it into words they should not wander from the point as they had done in 1802. It was necessary that, after a solemn debate, some other Assembly, duly primed, should lay before the Senate a definite proposal in keeping with the First Consul's ideas. Fabre de l'Aude, President of the Tribunate, offered the help of his Assembly, in which he had discovered a man prepared to present the Bill. This was the tribune Curée, an ex-conventional, who, moreover, boasted of being "a tried Republican," it being fully understood that the new Emperor was only to be the crowned head of the Republic. Curée presented a Bill "for establishing

Curée's  
Bill.

the hereditary principle in the Bonaparte family," and Fabre, very wisely, submitted it to the First Consul, who corrected the expression to "hereditary principle in the descendants of Napoleon Bonaparte."

But Joseph's friends were sufficiently influential to allow Fabre,



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who was one of their number, to re-introduce the original expression, and this was the form eventually put before the Tribunal.

On the 8th, Curée at last presented his Bill from the rostrum. It was immediately debated; an ex-conventional, "tried Republican," having presented it, an ex-Royalist, Siméon, who, before Fructidor, had been regarded as a future Minister of Louis XVIII, and was destined one day actually to fill that office, came forward and warmly seconded it. Thus, union between the parties had apparently been established, and the rest of the debate fell somewhat flat. Carnot saved the honour of the House.

### Carnot's Speech.

Having a far better right than Curée to the title of "tried Republican," he spoke without apparent passion, and rendered sober tribute to the distinguished services of the First Consul. He would not oppose the foundation of the Empire and promised to support the future Emperor, but insisted on his audience hearing the last cry of the Republic, which he saw dying before his eyes. But alas! she had long since been dead, killed by the very excesses to which the Committee of Public Safety had lent its name, and by the scandals of the Directory; and Carnot, who had been a member of both bodies, was well aware of this. Small wonder, then, that his moderation equalled his independence. At last, on the 10th Floréal (the 2nd of May), the Tribunal passed the motion—"1. That Napoleon Bonaparte . . . shall be appointed Emperor and in that capacity entrusted with the Government of the French Republic; 2. That the title of Emperor and the imperial power shall be hereditary in his family, descending always in the male line, by order of primogeniture; 3. That in introducing such changes into the constituent bodies as the establishment of the hereditary power demands, care shall be taken to safeguard Equality, Liberty, and the rights of the people in their entirety."

Curée's motion was passed, and the next morning the Parisians, who love a joke, declared with a laugh that "the Revolution was dead; a curé had buried it."

On the following day the motion was taken to the Senate, and a Commission was appointed to examine it. To avoid all possibility of mistake the Commission had the future Emperor consulted, more particularly on the much debated question of the succession.

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Napoleon, who, as far as this was concerned, had pretty well gained his point, owing to the form in which the motion had been passed by the Tribunate, behaved very well to his brothers, whom he did not wish to exasperate. The Empire was to be hereditary, not only in the "descendants" but "in the family of Bonaparte"; but—and this gave him the power to set aside these troublesome creatures—he had the famous "adoption" clause introduced, which gave Joseph an excuse for looking hurt at the very time when in theory he had become the heir presumptive to the Crown.

**Creation  
of New  
Posts.**

Moreover, for the time being, he was also appointed to one of the important posts which had just been created, that of Grand Elector. Other new offices were those of Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, Arch-Chancellor of State, Arch-Treasurer, Constable and Grand Admiral. In the event of the imperial family becoming extinct, the holders of these important offices were to elect the new Emperor. In addition sixteen Marshals of the Empire were created, four of whom were to be honorary.

These high offices and Field-Marshal's batons having served as a sop to individual ambition, it remained for the Assemblies also to receive due satisfaction. The powers of the Senate were in-

**The  
Assemblies  
Rewarded.**

creased; it was made the "guardian of public liberty," with the privilege of electing two Commissions for the safeguarding of the rights of the citizens, the one charged with the maintenance of "individual liberty" and the other with that of "the liberty of the Press," of which nothing had been heard for the last ten years. The Legislative Body, which, since it had not been in session at the time, had been unable to collaborate in the foundation of the Empire, was anxious to be at least associated with it in some way, and on the 20th Floréal, at a semi-official meeting held under the roof of Fontanes, its President, some of its members, on behalf of their body, proclaimed their enthusiastic support of the vote cast by the Tribunate; by way of reward, it had restored to it a right, particularly important in a country like France, the right of debate, provided that it took place in secret committee. As for the Tribunate, whose powers it was considered inadvisable to increase—Heaven forbid!—recognition of its services took a somewhat invidious form; the tribunes were given satisfaction in

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

a shape which never fails to appeal to the representatives of the people—their term of office was extended from five to ten years and their salary was raised from 15,000 to 25,000 livres. Lastly, in accordance with a wish expressed by the Senate on the 6th Germinal, a High Court of Empire was created to deal with crimes against the State.

The appointments to these high offices were made without delay. The highest, that of Arch-Chancellor of Empire, was conferred by way of compensation on the Second Consul, Cambacérès, who accepted it somewhat coldly, while his colleague,

Lebrun, took the position of Arch-Treasurer with his usual sceptical indifference. Eugene de Beauharnais, to whom his stepfather, in order to contradict the rumours of divorce, had resolved to

The New  
High  
Officials.

give a signal sign of favour, was appointed Arch-Chancellor of State. As Joseph was Grand Elector, Louis was made Constable, which gave rise to considerable astonishment, while even greater surprise was felt at the choice of Murat, a cavalry officer, as Grand Admiral. Lastly, Bonaparte appointed the sixteen Marshals, and since this, as a matter of fact, created ten malcontents, the sum total of the latter must, for the moment, have been quite thirty.

When all these details had been settled, the Senate was called upon to frame the *senatus consultum*, which was to give official legal form to these "monarchical" institutions.

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On the 28th Floréal (the 18th of May) the Senate having been convened for this noble purpose, Lacépède read the report entrusted to him by the Commission. Hardly had he opened his lips to begin when the impatient Senators (we are reminded of) Tacitus's description of those who "rushed into slavery") sprang to their feet and acclaimed his conclusions without waiting to hear what he had to say. As soon as the last line, proposing

Bonaparte  
Proclaimed  
Emperor.

that Napoleon Bonaparte should be proclaimed Emperor of the French, had been read, almost the whole Assembly rose as one man, and with prolonged cheers the vast throng, nearly all of whom had been members of the revolutionary Assemblies, soldiers in the

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old revolutionary army or members of the "philosophic" Institute, saluted the Cæsar they imagined they had made, but who had really been raised to supreme power by a grateful country. In a moment they were rushing to their carriages, all anxious to be the first to arrive at Saint Cloud, whither Cambacérès, who had presided at the session, was making his way with great pomp and ceremony at the head of the official deputation escorted by cavalry of the Guard.

Bonaparte was awaiting them with Josephine, extremely perturbed, at his side. He himself was perfectly calm, dignified without being stiff, but his youthful countenance—it is difficult to believe that he was only thirty-five at the time—shone with the joy and gratification which he found it impossible to conceal.

Hitherto, he had not allowed himself to be addressed as *monsieur*, a title to which so many had reverted during the last two years, but insisted on being *citizen*. But Cambacérès, as he advanced, pronounced the word "Sire!" and by this one word consecrated the most extraordinary destiny that has ever fallen to the lot of man.

The late Second Consul made an excellent speech, eulogistic without being platitudinous, while the thunder of the guns in Paris could be heard where they were in Saint Cloud. Napoleon's reply was brief but full of dignity. Whereupon, a prolonged shout of *Vive l'Empereur!* uttered for the first time, re-echoed through the hall. A few hours previously the Great Man had signed his last letter with the name of Bonaparte, which had already won such magic fame; an hour later he signed his first letter as Emperor with the name which was now to reverberate throughout the world like the roar of thunder—Napoleon!

"I submit the law of heredity to the sanction of the people," the Emperor had declared.

The result of this third plebiscite was never for a single moment in doubt. The comments collected by the police and the evidence we have to hand prove that, in every class of the community, almost unanimous and often enthusiastic approval was expressed.

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This was all the more striking seeing that for some weeks past Paris had been perturbed by the unfortunate "affair" which the

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Consulate had left as a legacy to the Empire. This was the Moreau case, which for a moment was thought would damp the ardour at least of the capital.

The execution of the Duc d'Enghien had aroused a certain amount of sympathy with those accused of conspiracy, and when Pichegru's Suicide. Pichegru strangled himself in his cell, the opponents of the Government, without waiting for an enquiry, immediately spread the rumour that he had been assassinated. But, as Albert Sorel points out, the only person in any way inconvenienced by the existence of Pichegru was Moreau himself, and with his death "the most damning evidence" against the latter was suppressed. But anything was eagerly seized upon to create and keep alive the faint atmosphere of disaffection centring round the trial.

The existence of this disaffection was proved during the course of the trial which opened on the 5th Prairial (the 28th of May). The conspirators, of whom Georges was the chief, had agreed between themselves to exonerate Moreau. The clash of wits between the lawyers, who from time to time were cheered by the public in the court where the hostile elements had arranged to meet, was almost throughout extremely keen.

Trial of Cadoudal and Moreau. Moreau's demeanour was grave and cautious; he was defended by the eloquent Bonnet, who so tempered the torrent of his eloquence that he impressed the judges more favourably than did his colleagues by their occasionally unruly vehemence. On the 21st Prairial the tribunal pronounced sentence. It condemned Georges to death, together with nineteen of his accomplices, among whom were Armand de Polignac and the Marquis de Rivière, the supporters of the Comte d'Artois; but Moreau was given only two years' imprisonment—too much if he were innocent, too little if he were guilty.

Napoleon was disappointed. Not that he wanted the death of the criminal, but after a capital sentence had been passed, he had counted on pardoning him. Now, he declared, the man who had been hand in glove with murderers, as the trial had definitely proved, had been given a sentence barely adequate for a pick-pocket. All the same he did not wish the victor of Hohenlinden to go to prison. Since the accused was still a centre of dis-

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affection, it was impossible for the Emperor merely to restore him to his former position by making him a Marshal. Moreover, Moreau showed himself embittered to the point of madness, as was subsequently proved when, flinging himself into the arms of his country's foes, the old soldier of the Revolution brought to a head the treasonable plot long since born of his secret resentment.

Georges was executed on the 9th Messidor (the 28th of June).

Cadoudal            He displayed the utmost fortitude on the scaffold.  
Executed.        The big clumsy fellow was a sort of Royalist  
Danton; he cracked jokes at the foot of the  
guillotine, and as the knife fell shouted "*Vive le Roi!*"

Napoleon had pardoned the Polignacs and Rivière. In this connection the Comte d'Artois afterwards wrote: "The monster was thinking only of his own interests and that alone held his natural brutality in check." And Moreau's pardon did not meet with any greater gratitude on the part of the new Emperor's opponents. The latter had decided to commute the sentence to one of exile. When rumours of certain activities on the part of the prisoner reached him, Napoleon sadly shook his head: "He will drop his mask and go straight over to our enemies," he declared. He was quite right, but he allowed Moreau to go to America, whence this great soldier who had gone so sadly astray returned only to bring further dishonour on his head.

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Meanwhile, preparations were being made for the plebiscite, which was to show how empty the agitation against Napoleon had been. There was a general rush for the polling booths. The workers, wrote one correspondent on the 3rd Prairial, were obviously delighted "at having the privilege of voting for the establishment of the hereditary principle in the imperial family," and urged one another on to go and vote. Even at this early date many who had been Royalists only a short while previously, as well as old Jacobins, were said to be voting in the Emperor's favour.

The result was made known on the 13th Frimaire. There were 3,572,329 votes in favour of the Empire and 2,579 against. In Paris 11,404 voted in favour and 66 against, while La Vendée, once

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the hotbed of the Royalists, voted almost unanimously in favour of the peacemaker, thereby confirming its vote of the year X. The departments of the South and East, a short while back fiercely revolutionary, returned crushing majorities in favour of the soldier of the Revolution. *Blues* and *Whites* voted side by side. It was not institutions that they acclaimed but, once again, the Man, and nothing but the Man, and they insisted on overwhelming with votes the ruler who had overwhelmed the nation with favours. Since the 20th Brumaire, after having snatched France from the arms of death, he had presented her once more to the eyes of the world, clothed with a prestige she had never before enjoyed.

The Empire was the brilliant reward conferred on five years of the Consulate; it is perhaps the most glorious page in one of the most glorious of histories—that of France.

**SOURCES.** Those already mentioned by Aulard, Bailleu, Boulay de la Meurthe (*Enghien*), Remâcle, Pingaud (*d'Antraigues*), Letters of the Comte de Tournon, published by the Abbé Moulard, Fiévée, II, and Madame de Rémusat. *Memoirs or Reminiscences* by Roederer, Queen Hortense, Madame de Rémusat, Savary, Meneval (I and III), General Tiébaud (III), Miot de Melito, d'Andigné (II), and Berryer, senior. Girardin, *Journal*, II. Pelet, *Opinions*. Marquiset, *Napoléon sténographié*.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel, Masson (*Famille*, II and III, and *Jadis*, I), Driault, Madelin, Lanzac de Laborie (II and III), Gabory, and Aulard.

# THE EMPIRE

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CONSECRATION

"The Republic is made man." The Empire ; on whom is the system to rely ? Uncasiness of public opinion. Restoration of the Ministry of General Police and recall of Fouché. Fouché's policy. Financial crisis ; "The Company of United Merchants." Preparations for the invasion of England ; the part to be played by the fleet ; the camp at Boulogne. Europe ; the Powers divided ; apparent failure to form a Coalition. Diversion created by Villeneuve's squadron. Napoleon on the Rhine ; the homage of the Germans. Preparations for the Consecration ; Pius VII consents to preside over it ; the meeting at Fontainebleau. Public opinion regarding the Consecration. The Family ; the question of divorce. Josephine and "*le mariage forcé*." Proclamation of the plebiscite. The ceremony of Consecration. The throne in the Legislative Body.

"**I** fear it will be said that our Republic is made man," wrote the future historian Michaud soon after Brumaire. The Republic had indeed been made man ; Napoleon Bonaparte was Emperor, "Emperor of the Republic," as he was still called in 1805, and as the inscriptions on the coins described him until 1808.

The  
Republic  
Made Man.

The Emperor, with due regard for the splendour befitting his position, gathered about him a Court to which he summoned the bearers of the great names of the old France, surrounding himself with a pomp and ceremony which were but little to his personal taste, and with a decorum such as had never before

The  
Imperial  
Court.

existed, because, as he explained to Roederer, as early as the 4th of November, 1804, "it is all part of a system." Nevertheless, this Imperial Government was essentially the Government of the bourgeoisie who, having been installed as the sole repository of power ever since 1789, were now confirmed by the Emperor in their acquisitions. As he said in a letter to Gaudin, he hoped to find the main support of the *régime* in "the well-to-do families," but "above all in the good families who belonged to what used to



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be known as the Third Estate, the soundest section of the community and the one bound to the Government by the strongest and most numerous ties." But he added: "Most of these ideas should be esoteric; that is the Emperor's real feeling on the subject." In this respect he certainly carried on the traditions of the Revolution; having stabilised its results he continued to employ its men. But in summoning the members of the old nobility to serve it, and the representatives of the new bourgeoisie to lend it their support, while also calling upon the Democracy as a whole to legitimise it, the new Emperor felt that, more than any of those who had seized the reins of power since 1792, he was fulfilling the ideal of a Republican ruler.

Nevertheless, directly after the proclamation of the Empire, there was a general feeling of political uneasiness. The extremists, who, after the institution of the Consulship for life, had been completely pacified or reduced to silence, were again whipped up for a while into a state of extreme exasperation by the proclamation of the Empire. The few irreconcilable Republicans who had but little liking for this hybrid "Imperial Republic" were infuriated by the downfall of Moreau, who, contrary to all the evidence, they maintained had never sided with the Chouans. The Royalists, on the other hand, endeavoured to exploit the feelings aroused by the execution of the Duc d'Enghien. As a matter of fact, it was the Pretender himself who was to be responsible for making the Republican die-hards rally to the Empire and for discouraging all Royalists endowed with a grain of common sense. When the act of "usurpation" had been consummated, Louis XVIII, in the course of a solemn declaration, "renewed his protestations against all the illegal acts which, ever since the opening of the States-General, have in turn led to the terrible crisis at present existing in France and the rest of Europe." This meant calling in question all the results attained since 1789. Napoleon regarded the letter as being so opportune for his cause that he had it published at full length in the *Moniteur*.

It required this tactless manifesto on the part of the "King" to bring back to the Emperor's side that section of public opinion which recent events had left in a state of uncertainty. The Parisian bourgeoisie, who had been dragged into the disaffection

## THE CONSECRATION

created by the Moreau case, had displayed a certain coolness towards the foundation of the Empire, and, curiously enough, the Bourse had responded by a rapid fall, *rentes* dropping from fifty-nine to fifty-two. For some weeks the daily police reports sounded a melancholy note with their repeated, "The Bourse is dull," while theatre audiences, consisting chiefly of shopkeepers, seditiously applauded any passages which could be interpreted as being hostile to the new *régime*.

As a matter of fact, the masses displayed their whole-hearted loyalty, artisans, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and soldiers, all cordially rushing to the support of the new *régime*, as the results of the plebiscite proved day by day.

Nevertheless, Napoleon could not help seeing that for the time being political passions, revived by the events of the last few months, would remain febrile. Georges' conspiracy, at which England, to put it mildly, had clearly connived, proved to him, moreover, that his "enemy" intended once more to use any weapon she could lay hold of. Thus the restoration

Fouché  
Recalled.      of the Ministry of General Police appeared to him absolutely necessary, and on the 22nd Messidor (the 11th of July) he re-instituted it and recalled Fouché.

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The Emperor did not like the man, but he appreciated him. And he was right not to like him, but to appreciate him. Fouché would never make a really loyal servant, but he would always be an extremely valuable servant, because he was the right man in the right place. He re-installed himself once more in the offices of the General Police, and in three months had completely reorganised his Ministry, which was destined to become ten times as powerful as the old institution of which he had been the head. It was a most formidable concern, the workings of which I have described elsewhere. With the improvements which he was constantly introducing it enabled him to keep France more or less quiet during ten years of war, inevitably the fertile source of disturbances and conspiracies.

Cruelly realistic in outlook, entirely devoid of principle or scruple, and endowed with a clear, vivacious and occasionally audacious intellect, Fouché was undoubtedly the man whom both

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

the Emperor and the Empire required. While, as a general rule, the great servants of the *régime* were certainly men of worth and valour, yet when confronted by a formidable master and events that were slightly out of the ordinary, they were incapable of rising above a mediocre display of courage and initiative. But Fouché would not allow either the Master or events to impose upon him. At a time when a personal policy seemed beyond the reach of all, he alone, as he had done under the Consulate, insisted on having one and converting the Emperor to it. And from the moment he returned to his Ministry, which was destined to develop into something more than the Ministry of Police, and virtually to become the Ministry of the Interior, he resolutely faced all those problems which nobody else even dared to raise.

From the very beginning, as he confessed to Bourrienne, he had congratulated himself on having helped to found the Empire. A throne was essential. "The aim of the Revolution was not the overthrow of the Bourbons," he declared, but as Louis XVI had offered resistance it had been "necessary to abolish the throne and even to execute the King." Nevertheless, as the rule of the Directory had proved, "a Republic was impossible in France," and the rise of a new dynasty once and for all put an end to any fears that might previously have existed of a Bourbon restoration. But, added the Minister, the new system, once established, had to be made durable, capable of resisting its enemies and, if necessary, even the Emperor himself. The latter could be overthrown only after a disastrous war; consequently any fresh outbreak of war should, as far as possible, be avoided. And, as a matter of fact, Fouché was always an ardent advocate of peace. A further menace was the possible modification of the spirit of the régime, which for the moment was the true creation of the Revolution; and this, too, would mean its downfall. Thus, it was imperative at all costs to keep the revolutionary spirit alive, and now that its defenders, the old conventionals, had been set aside, to prevent it from being undermined by its enemies, the old Royalists or Catholics of counter-revolutionary tendencies. And the Master himself required somebody to follow him, for as long as he had no heirs, there was the constant fear that his death might be the signal for dissolution. "His brothers are revoltingly incapable,"

## THE CONSECRATION

he exclaimed, "and we should see a new party springing up in favour of the Bourbons." In due course we shall describe how Fouché, disappointed in the results of his determined campaign in favour of divorce, did not hesitate, later on, to submit to the Emperor successors of his own choosing, great soldiers like Murat and Bernadotte ; but he was always in favour of the Great Man himself, of whom he had the highest opinion and whom he regarded as the only person capable of preventing, once and for all, the return of the Bourbons and the Counter-Revolution.

In short, for the time being, he was loyal, if not to the Emperor, at least to the *régime*, and his provisional fidelity, illumined by his perspicacity, was also fortified by his ability. And this, I repeat, made him a precious servant.

His first step was to clear the air of the Moreau case, and he succeeded in hastening the embarkation of this troublesome soldier for America and obtained from the tribune Moreau a letter condemning the agitation raised in his brother's name. The machinations of the Royalists would have caused him uneasiness only if their activities had spread from Paris to the West. He knew that a web of conspiracy was being spun, but as all the information was already in his hands, he was in a position to break it up at any moment. Thus the Emperor with his mind set at rest was able to turn his whole attention to the affairs of Europe. A wide-awake, vigilant and iron-fisted Minister was keeping watch at home.

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And he was, indeed, indispensable if the Emperor was to devote himself heart and soul to the colossal enterprise which he was still planning against England, and also keep under observation the rest of Europe, ever on the alert to put a spoke in his wheel.

"The invasion of England and an occupation of two months would mean a hundred years of peace for France," was the somewhat terrifying statement which the treacherous "Fair Friend" of England in the Tuileries received from the Emperor's own lips. But this invasion meant the possession of infinite resources, and it was barely two years since the Treasury, after having with great difficulty been restored to a sound footing, had begun to show signs of prosperity, which, however, might at any moment cease to

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

exist. The results of a wise financial administration began to be felt only in 1805, and until then money, plenty of money, was required. To satisfy the Emperor's demands, the Minister of the Public Treasury laid hands on it where he could. He even sought to raise it in a quarter extremely repugnant to the Master—he turned to the financiers for help. It was almost

**Barbé-  
Marbois'  
Financial  
Policy.**

without Napoleon's knowledge that, as early as the summer of 1804, Barbé-Marbois entered into somewhat risky transactions with "The Company of United Merchants," formed by three capitalists,

Vanlenbergh, Després and the notorious Ouvrard, and asked them for advances which, before long, by placing the Treasury in their power, led to the great financial crisis which presently supervened. As a matter of fact, for the time being, the security for these advances consisted of the galleons which Spain was expecting from America to enable her to pay her debts to France; for the moment Barbé-Marbois' one thought was to place at the disposal of the Master all the money he required, while Napoleon, eager to act, was paying but scant attention to the means whereby his Minister secured it.

His whole heart and soul was now concentrated on this enterprise which, by putting a sudden end to the war with England, would nip in the bud any attempt at forming a

**Preparations  
for Invading  
England.**

coalition. The Minister of whom he saw most at this time was the Minister of Marine. In order

to protect the passage of the troops it was necessary to clear the Channel of English battleships for two days.

Admiral Latouche-Tréville was placed in charge of this difficult operation. Leaving Toulon, he was to pretend to set sail for Egypt, but, turning back, was quickly to make the Straits of Gibraltar, join up with the squadron at Rochefort and appear in the Channel. In order to hold Lord Cornwallis's squadron, which, cruising off Brest, might bar the way, Admiral Ganteaume, who was blockaded in the roadstead, was to come out, offer battle and, if necessary, sacrifice himself in order to keep the English fleet where it was. Latouche-Tréville, summoned to Paris, undertook the task, and all the French fleets were armed for action. Whereupon the Emperor was able to leave for Boulogne, where, for the last six months, the army of invasion was being got ready. Before leaving,

## THE CONSECRATION

he distributed in the church of Les Invalides, on the festival of the 14th of July, the first ribbons of the Legion of Honour to be bestowed on civilians, and he did not take his departure until he had sent a fiery despatch to Latouche-Tréville saying: "If only we can be masters of the Channel for six hours we shall be masters of the world!"

**First Distribution of the Legion of Honour Ribbon.**

On the 20th of July he took up his quarters at Pont-de-Briques, a suburb of Boulogne. "I have about me," he wrote, "over 120,000 men and 3,000 sloops and pinnaces which are only awaiting a favourable wind in order to carry the imperial eagle against the Tower of

**Napoleon in Boulogne.**

London." But he was soon obliged to change his tone. In his absence nothing had been pushed on, nothing had been finished. So what was the good of burying himself in Boulogne? Before returning to Paris, however, he made up his mind to give the army, which he was leaving for a while, a splendid memento of his visit. On the 15th of August, from a magnificently draped platform facing the coast of England, and surrounded by all his Marshals, he distributed crosses to the soldiers and eagles to the colours. It was a wonderful moment, full of hopes destined all too soon to be disappointed. The eagles, intended to fly towards the "Tower of London," went in due course to Vienna, Naples, Rome, Berlin, Warsaw, Madrid, and to the walls of Cadiz, and also for an hour, one brief hour, to Moscow. But they never went to London, though it was for the purpose of mastering London that the eagles of Boulogne overran the whole of Europe. Already events were about to happen which, sooner or later, would lead them to all the capitals of Europe.

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Ever since May Europe had been confronted with the proclamation of the Empire and seemed almost cowed. An attempt, though merely tentative, was being made to form a coalition. As we know, it had been in the air ever since 1792 and continued to be so after 1804. Albert Sorel's theory, though severely criticised by Edouard Driault, seems to me, after a further study of it, to be correct. Napoleon could never have been sincerely and unreservedly accepted by the rest of Europe any more than

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

the Revolution had been from which he sprang. But in 1804

**Attitude of Europe.**

Europe, cruelly disappointed and lacerated by the recent campaigns, was still hesitating to embark once more on enterprises of any magnitude.

Moreover, she was still divided. St. Petersburg was trying to drag Vienna and Berlin in her wake; but, expelled alike from Italy and Germany, Austria was thrown back on the Balkans, where the Ottoman Empire already seemed to be a "sick man" whose heritage would soon be available. The Habsburgs were anxious to secure part of it, but suspected Russia of wishing to seize it all, and it was this that was destined, even during the course of the next ten years, to cause considerable embarrassment between Vienna and St. Petersburg, not to mention difficulties with England, who also had her own views on the subject of Constantinople. Prussia, who was not interested in the Balkans, would have been glad to see Vienna turning towards this eastern peninsula, for she was afraid that if she were disappointed in that quarter Austria might meditate once more seizing those parts of Germany from which the other Princes, whose territories lay between the Rhine and the Vistula, had just driven her. The Tsar continued to urge his appeals against France, but all in vain! And thus it came about that when, on the 7th of May, 1804, Talleyrand circularised the various European Governments with a view to obtaining official recognition of the new Empire, he found Europe so divided that, except in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, there was no need for him to fear a rebuff. And, as a matter of fact, but for Sweden and Russia, everybody gave way.

Napoleon now felt reassured—the Continent did not seem likely to trouble him for some months to come. This was fortunate, for, just at this juncture, the invasion of England had once more to be postponed. We shall see how in this all-important connection Fate, usually so propitious towards Napoleon, was to turn, with a sort of relentless determination, against his best laid plans.

**Villeneuve in Command of the French Fleet.**

Latouche-Tréville, who had understood and adopted his designs for the naval campaign, died quite suddenly. Out of friendship, Admiral Decrès, the Minister of Marine, recommended Villeneuve to succeed him. Villeneuve was a fine sailor, but

his timorous nature made him the worst possible person to

## THE CONSECRATION

face and carry out fearlessly an enterprise conducted on a grand scale and full of difficulties. The Emperor, however, confirmed the appointment, but, mistrusting the man, modified his plan. Villeneuve, at the head of the Mediterranean fleet, was instructed to set sail in the direction of the Antilles with the object of acting as a decoy for the British fleets, and thus raising the blockade of Brest and allowing Ganteaume to come out into the Channel and protect the crossing of the army of invasion. But this perforce meant postponing the enterprise until the beginning of the winter.

On his departure from Boulogne the Emperor made a triumphal tour of the Rhine provinces. His pilgrimage to the tomb of Charlemagne was in the nature of a prelude to the Consecration for which preparations were being made. At Mayence he received the envoys sent by the Princes of the right bank of the Rhine, who also had no scruples about conjuring up the memory not only of Charlemagne but also "of the first of *our* Roman Cæsars to cross the Rhine and drive out the Barbarians." Not content with sanctioning by their presence the recovery of the left bank of the Rhine by the new Cæsar, their action also threw open the right bank to him. Moreover, at the "imperial palace" at Aix-la-Chapelle, Napoleon had also received Count Cobenzl, who had been sent to convey the recognition of the imperial title by the last descendant of the Germanic Cæsars. And lastly, from Cologne he had sent the official letter in which he begged the Pope, who had already been prepared, to come to Paris and conduct the ceremony of Consecration.

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The conception of the new Empire was too obviously dominated by the "Carlovingian" ideal for consecration by the Pope, in accordance with the traditions of Pépin and Charlemagne, not to have been immediately apparent to all. Napoleon had felt no hesitation in raising the question even in a Council of State which he had packed with survivors of the Revolution. Naturally it had met with lively opposition on their part, but the Emperor's reply to their objections had been entirely realistic: "Everything which tends to sanctify the ruler of a State is of inestimable



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

benefit," he declared; and, with a view to winning over the old revolutionaries in the Council, he added: "We must estimate the advantage we shall derive from it by the annoyance it will cause our enemies. What will the Bourbons have to say about it?" Whereupon the Court of Rome had been approached.

Pius VII, still under the influence of the Concordat and of the various proofs of goodwill with which, for the last two years,

the First Consul had literally never ceased to overwhelm the cause of religion, was inclined to accept. But the Cardinals, nearly all of whom were

hostile, regarded the suggestion as outrageous. Nevertheless, the Curia gave way, on condition that the Holy Father received an assurance that he would not return from Paris empty-handed, but would secure substantial recompense both in the temporal and the ecclesiastical sphere—the re-establishment of Legations in the patrimony of St. Peter, certain modifications in the Organic Articles, the abolition of divorce in the Civil Code, etc. The Pope made his expectations known; Paris apparently agreed to them in principle, and Pius VII raised no further objections. He then proceeded to make his way in an extremely leisurely fashion in the direction of Paris, while the Emperor, quivering with impatience, urged him to hasten, rather too much as though he were "an ordinary chaplain whom his master was summoning to say Mass," wrote Consalvi. He was to reach Fontainebleau on the 27th of November. The Emperor, who loved dramatic situations, had arranged to meet the coach conveying the Pontiff in the middle of the forest where he was hunting, and it was in hunting

costume and caked with mud that he casually presented himself at the door of the carriage on the cross-roads at Saint Herem. But it was with

the utmost cordiality and deference that he invited the Holy Father to descend and get into his own carriage, and the Head of the Catholic Church made his entry into the court of the Palace surrounded by an escort of Mamelukes most of whom were Mahomedans. The Pope did not appear to be in any way offended; from the very first moment he had been won over by the open-hearted candour of the Emperor, who, as a matter of fact, in such circumstances always exploited his seductive personality to the utmost. This first impression was never

## THE CONSECRATION

effaced, and the almost ardent affection felt by the aged priest for the young ruler was destined to survive the severest trials and the most cruel wrongs.

The Pope was no less charmed a few days later by the welcome accorded to him by the people of Paris. He entered it on the 28th of November, to the accompaniment of enthusiastic signs of veneration which, since the prejudices of Rome had not yet subsided, surprised even more than they moved him. He seems above all to have been struck by the unanimity he found about the person of the new Sovereign. What had become of the country which the Curia, five years behind the times, pictured as still being in a state of upheaval owing to the Revolution and torn by the dissensions to which it had given birth?

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The Emperor himself, however, at least in his own environment, had not for the last three months felt that such perfect concord existed and the Consecration gave rise to more than one dispute.

I do not refer to the indignant protests with which the Right as well as the Left had met the Pope's visit. The Royalists, whose last organisations Fouché was engaged in demolishing, were bitterly mortified by Pius VII's action. The Comte de Maistre, who afterwards published a book entitled *Le Pape*, set the tone in stigmatising him as an "unworthy pontiff" who, as the Comtesse d'Albany wrote, "had sold his dignity." Those in the immediate circle of Louis XVIII denounced the scandal, but they felt they had been dealt a mortal blow, and the Royalists in France, overwhelmed, showed little signs of activity. The Republicans, on the other hand, were indignant that a soldier, a son of the Revolution, should have "prostituted" it "at the feet of a priest." "It was a blatant alliance of every form of charlatanism," wrote Beyle, known to posterity as Stendhal, "religion coming forward to consecrate tyranny and making human happiness the pretext." With these words Beyle, who afterwards became an *auditeur* in the Council of State, put the grievances of the Left in a nutshell. But it was round the person of the new Emperor himself that the opposing parties disagreed most violently over the event.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

On the Right, Fontanes' followers insisted that the Consecration in Notre Dame should be, if not the Canossa of the Revolution, at least a species of "expiation" for "philosophic errors." Fontanes, who was President of the Legislative Body, did not delegate to others the task of proclaiming this, for, in an address to the Pope, he referred to France as "from that moment abjuring her all too gross errors." The journals of the Right, the *Mercure* and the *Débats*, who were conducting a campaign against everything connected with the Revolution, redoubled their efforts, which led their opponents in the Press to reply in the shape of bitter articles against the agents of the Jesuits. Both sides took stock of one another, while the Emperor in vain implored them all to unite on the day which, unlike them, he regarded as being the coping-stone of his work of reconciliation.

Lastly, in his own immediate circle, violent dissensions took place as this great day drew nearer. "The Emperor is really

most unfortunate in his family," wrote one fair and ardent admirer of Napoleon at this time; "they are all perfect devils for tormenting him."

The proclamation of the Empire had unchained all these "devils." As Lucien had refused to get rid of "la Jouberton," a divorced woman and an erstwhile *mercailleuse* of the Directory, whom he had married against Napoleon's will, and as Jerome insisted on remaining faithful to Eliza Paterson, whom he had married in America, also against the will of his august brother, Napoleon had erased their names from the list of new princes of the blood. Their mother was alarmed by this, regarding this twofold disgrace as a loosening of family ties at the very moment when the Great Man was coming into his own. And, as a matter of fact, Napoleon had further reasons for finding the family he was dragging in his wake an extremely onerous burden. Louis, who was growing ever more and more morose, obstinately refused to entertain the idea of his son's adoption by the Emperor, and in this connection had even dared to refer in front of him to the infamous rumours which were being circulated by the London Press regarding the paternity of the little Napoleon. As for Joseph, his attitude caused his brother the greatest annoyance. He accepted his dignities with an air of haughty disdain, and yet intrigued to have them increased still

## THE CONSECRATION

further, and in front of his friends, all of whom were secretly opposed to the Emperor, pretended to treat with "philosophic" contempt a magnificent achievement of which he was inordinately jealous. But the plague of Napoleon's existence was the difficulty he experienced in freeing himself from the strong family feeling with which he was animated, and which was particularly powerful in connection with his elder brother, constantly forcing him to give him what he wanted, even though grudgingly. Even his sisters wore him out with their requests. They declared that they had been forgotten, for, while Joseph and Louis had become princes of the blood and Imperial Highnesses, they remained Madame Bacciochi, Madame Borghese and Madame Murat. They made no attempt to conceal their anger, above all Caroline. "I have to fight a regular pitched battle with her," declared Napoleon. "To make my little sister understand my ideas I should have to make speeches as long as the ones I make in the Council of State." She joined with Élise (Pauline, who was a Roman princess by marriage, was not so much concerned) in insisting upon being given the title of Imperial Highness. These Corsicans all wanted, even before the Consecration of the Emperor, to have a miniature consecration of their own. In the end the sisters succeeded in having their wishes gratified.

The truth of the matter was—and it was here that these disputes were linked up with affairs of State—Napoleon's brothers and sisters, terribly jealous of the place the Beauharnais had "usurped" in the family and affections of the Emperor, had but one thought in mind, which was that before the Consecration their brother should get a divorce. They still looked upon Josephine as an "intruder." On the pretext that her union with Napoleon had never received the blessing of the Church, her mother-in-law regarded it as illegal, and even Joseph—the philosopher!—made a similar excuse for referring to her as "the Emperor's present companion." The new Empress, as we know, had always felt the precarious nature of her position; the creation of a hereditary Empire was a direct menace to her, and she had bewailed the elevation of her husband to the throne which many, including herself, regarded as the prelude to her own downfall. These fears, however, proved baseless; for the time being, Napoleon

**Their  
Hostility to  
Josephine.**

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

had not the slightest intention of obtaining a divorce. And in front of Roederer, Joseph's creature, he vaunted the sovereign grace and devotion of "his dear wife." He would keep her and have her crowned. His family must resign themselves to it.

This gave rise to further scenes until the very eve of the Consecration. The Emperor was sick to death of it all. "During the ten days this dispute has lasted," he observed to Joseph, "I have not had a moment's peace. It has kept me awake at night, and you are the only people who can exercise so much power over me." This was a confession; the family made a note of it and postponed their twofold vengeance—the conquest of thrones for themselves and the all too belated dismissal of the woman whom the new "Madame Mère" still called "Madame de Beauharnais," because no priest had passed her way.

Josephine had been trembling in her shoes. As I have already observed, this apparently careless and frivolous creole was calculating at heart. During the weeks that had just elapsed she had seen how fragile was the union which the absence of religious sanction helped to make more precarious than ever. But she too knew how to manœuvre, even better than her adversaries, and this woman, who had the reputation of being thoughtless and giddy, also succeeded in carrying out a miniature *coup d'état* of her own. On the very eve of the Consecration she asked for an audience of Pius VII, and revealed to him a state of affairs of which he was ignorant and which staggered him. He then informed the Emperor that it would be impossible for him to preside over the coronation of an Empress who, in the eyes of the Church, was nothing but a "concubine." I would not venture to maintain that Napoleon did not admire this little manœuvre; in any case, though he always hated having his

hand forced, he complied. And that very night, the 1st of December, in the presence of two witnesses, Cardinal Fesch gave his blessing to this strange marriage in the chapel of the Tuilleries.

"And thus," writes Albert Sorel, "the vigil over the arms of Charlemagne had by way of interlude a performance of *Le Mariage Forcé*."

## THE CONSECRATION

Meanwhile, on the same day, the Consecration had been given a more solemn prelude.

For on that same 1st of December the Emperor had solemnly received the results of the plebiscite from the hands of the Senate, and François de Neufchâteau, the President, had offered his congratulations on this popular consecration which "had steered the ship of the Republic safely into port." The Emperor had replied by the noblest of speeches to this fresh proof of affection bestowed upon him by "*la Grande Nation*," and had referred to the responsibilities such a gesture of confidence imposed upon him and "his descendants." Napoleon had insisted that this ceremony, which was a sort of popular—and republican—consecration, should immediately precede the religious rite and be linked up with it.

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On the 28th Thermidor of the year III, the *Bonhomme Richard*, a popular revolutionary journal, had written as follows with reference to Notre Dame: "I think it will be a very long time before a gold-laced monarch will do honour to God by paying a visit to this church, whether on horseback or on foot." And probably there was not a single Frenchman at that time who would not have agreed with this assertion. Which only proves that in France above all it is better not to play the prophet. For on the 11th Frimaire of the year XIII, less than ten years later, a "gold-laced monarch" did "do honour to God by paying a visit to this church," and it was the Vicar of Christ who, in the name of the Almighty, under the vault of this same basilica of the Capet Kings, which had seen the Goddess of Reason dressed as a Citizeness in gorgeous robes ensconced upon her altars, consecrated the soldier of the Revolution.

The cold winter's day, after a night of unusual severity, was lit up by an unexpected burst of sunshine, and Paris, gay with flags, shone forth resplendent. "The decorations," wrote one of the newspapers, "might have been the work of fairy wands."

At nine o'clock in the morning the Pope had passed in procession from the Louvre to Notre Dame, through a dense crowd whose

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

attitude was at once deferential and supercilious ; at ten o'clock salvos of guns signalled the departure of the imperial train under the canopy of a pale blue sky. Headed by endless bodies of cavalry and carriages crammed with civilian uniforms, the imperial coach, a huge golden cage with glass sides and surmounted by four eagles supporting a crown, made its way through the streets. Inside it the Emperor had on his left the Empress, and facing him his two brothers, Joseph and Louis, dressed in white velvet embroidered with gold. The Empress, in white satin embroidered with silver and glittering with diamonds, with a diamond and pearl diadem on her head, looked ten years younger, "because she was so happy," said some, but also, said others, because the painter Isabey had that morning used all his art to paint the lily. The Emperor, in purple velvet embroidered with gold, and with a white plumed hat on his head, appeared quite as much at his ease in this gorgeous array as he had done in his beaver hat and grey riding-coat. At a quarter to twelve the procession arrived at the Archbishop's Palace, where the Emperor and Empress put on their coronation robes, huge red velvet mantles embroidered with bees, laurels and golden eagles and lined with ermine.

The aged Cardinal de Belloy, a nonagenarian who had seen Louis XIV, handed the holy water to the imperial pair in the portico and conducted them into the church, which huge boardings had, in accordance with the taste of the day, transformed into a Greek temple literally full to overflowing with the official world in the most variegated costumes.

The Pope was at the altar, the Emperor advanced, knelt down and received the triple unction ; the Empress followed in her turn. This was, properly speaking, the Consecration, after which the Pope's part, according to Napoleon, was at an end. For the most important incident of the day now followed. Pius VII, who had come from Rome quite as much "to crown" as to "consecrate," had been respectfully informed on the previous day that he was to "consecrate" but not to "crown." With a sigh of resignation he had consented to this drastic modification of the Roman Pontifical upon which Napoleon, with his clear-sighted vision, had so imperiously insisted. At this supreme

## THE CONSECRATION

moment the Emperor even gave the impression that he was keeping a careful watch over what was being said in Latin. Nevertheless, he must have been moved to the depths of his being, for if we may believe what we are told, as he was going up to the Pope to be consecrated, he whispered in his brother's ear: "Joseph, if only our father could see us!"

The Emperor, after having been consecrated at the foot of the altar steps, ascended them, raised the imperial crown from the altar, and with steady hands placed it on his own head. Whereupon he picked up the crown of the Empress, who was kneeling waiting at the foot of the steps, descended them with firm and measured tread, and with a gesture full of affection, which was certainly not feigned, placed it on the head of the woman whose whole frame was shaken with emotion. This was the act afterwards immortalised by David, since his famous picture *The Consecration of the Emperor* in reality turned out quite unexpectedly to be *The Coronation of the Empress*.

Whereupon the imperial couple returned to their thrones through the choir. The Pope followed them and gave them his blessing. And then, after kissing the Emperor, he turned to the people and called out in a loud voice: "*Vivat Imperator in æternum!*" The whole congregation acclaimed him to the sound of the trumpets accompanied by the roar of the organs. One witness, who was by no means friendly, wrote: "I can still see the ever impressive figure of that man with the compelling gaze; he seemed no longer human save in outward form."

When the ceremony was over the procession returned to the Archbishop's palace and then made its way to the Tuileries as before, the Emperor and Empress still wearing the crowns placed on their heads in Notre Dame. But as it had been decided to satisfy the enthusiastic curiosity of the crowd, the cortège, preceded and accompanied by 20,000 torches, made its way to the Palace by a wide detour through the Rue Saint Martin and the boulevards. For night had fallen and the illumination lamps and flares had been lighted up. Loud and prolonged cheering broke out in all the thoroughfares through which it passed, and even reached the ears of the new Sovereigns long after they had returned to the Tuileries and had laid aside their crowns and heavy robes.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Festivities were kept up for a fortnight. A few weeks later the Emperor went to the Palais Bourbon to open the new session of the Legislative Body. "If death does not

### Coronation Festivities.

snatch me away in the middle of my labours," he said, "I hope to leave to posterity a memorial which will be a lasting example or a lasting reproach to my successors." In the precincts of the Palace in which the Legis-

### The Golden Throne.

lative Body sat, a throne "all shining with gold, surmounted by the imperial arms and shaded by a huge golden palm tree," had been erected at the top of five marble steps. It was to this throne that the new

Sovereign referred. Among the deputies, all full of the wildest enthusiasm, there were survivors of all the revolutionary Assemblies, and above all of that Legislative Body which, on the 26th of September, 1791, had inaugurated its session with the decision that the descendant of Saint Louis and of Louis XIV, King Louis XVI, "the first servant of the nation," should have the right only to a seat on the right of its President. Only thirteen years ago! Nay—a whole century ago!

**SOURCES.** Works already mentioned by Bailleu, Pingaud, and Boulay de la Meurthe (*Enghien*). Aulard, *Paris sous l'Empire*, I. D'Hauterive, *La Police secrète* (Bulletins de police, 1804-1807). *Correspondance de Napoléon*, X. Works already mentioned by Pelet and Marquiset. Madame de Rémusat's Letters. Girardin, *Journal*, II. Comtesse d'Albany, *Portefeuille*. Stendhal, *Correspondance*. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Roederer, Queen Hortense, Pontécoulant, Thibaudeau, Thiébault, Barante, I., Bourrienne, VI, Molé, Madame de Chastenay, d'Andigné, II, Cardinal Consalvi, and Baron Sers.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel, Madelin, Masson (III), Lanzac de Laborie (III, IV, VI), Pingaud (*Bernadoite*), Gautier, Latreille, Marion, Levasseur, and Driault (II). Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre*. Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime*. *Napoléon et la Paix*. Haussonville, *L'Eglise et le Premier Empire*. Masson, *Joséphine de Beauharnais*. Rodocanachi, *Pie VII à Paris*. Marmottan, *Elisa Bonaparte*.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE FAILURE OF THE INVASION

Offer of peace to England. Preparations for the Coalition. The Kingdom of Italy. The Pope's anxiety. Instructions to the fleets. The coronation in Milan; annexations in Italy. The naval plans miscarry. Formation of the Coalition; the Tsar's policy; he forms an alliance with England; the bases of 1805; outlines of the bases of 1813; adherence of Austria. Villeneuve makes a mistake and comes to grief. Failure of the invasion. The Boulogne army hurled on Germany; the "seven torrents." Public opinion in Paris and the financial crisis. The Emperor declares he will set matters right by victory.

**T**HE Consecration could not change the attitude either of England or of the rest of Europe. But Napoleon was determined to profit by the occasion to impress men's minds, and on the 2nd of January, 1805, he offered to make peace with George III. The reply was slow in coming. England now felt sure of a Coalition which was already in process of formation. Novossilzoff, who had been sent by the Tsar to London on the pretext of making the famous offer of mediation which Bonaparte himself had once suggested, had arrived at the end of September, 1804, bearing instructions most unfavourable to France, their main object being to "force her to return within her old boundaries."

The attitude of the Russian envoy had encouraged the British Government. On the 4th of December, England, feeling that she would never be able to persuade the Court of Madrid to desert Napoleon, had declared war on Spain. She hoped to turn the opportunity to account in order to lay hands on the Spanish colonies in South America, and also, in the meantime, to seize before they were able to reach port the galleons on which Spain was counting to enable her to pay off her debts to France. The spirit in which the British Government was entering upon the struggle

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

proved that she did not intend the war to be one of defence.

The Emperor certainly felt that a Coalition was being formed and wished to be perfectly clear about it. He was fond of saying

**Preparations  
for a  
Coalition.**

that "in war as in love, to put it behind you, you must come to grips." He would have said the same of diplomacy. Having heard that

Austria was advancing her troops, he demanded an explanation. Austria replied that all she was doing was to form a sanitary cordon on her frontiers to protect her territory from the "yellow fever." A sanitary cordon of 80,000 men! Napoleon did not believe a word of this excuse. He adopted a menacing tone and, for the moment, Austria apparently put a stop to her armaments; the scare of yellow fever seemed to have died down. For the time being Napoleon contented himself with an explanation which postponed the conflict. Lucchesini, the Prussian Minister in Paris, warned Berlin to be careful, and Europe, intimidated by these salutary admonitions, did not dare to raise a finger. But she was on the watch for a pretext, which was provided by the necessity of reaching a settlement with regard to Italy.

For the proclamation of the Empire had raised the question of the Kingdom of Italy. The Emperor of the French could not be a mere President of a Transalpine Republic, but neither could he allow northern Italy to elude his direct control. Nevertheless, in order to humour the susceptibilities of his critics, he had thought of creating a kingdom for his brother Joseph, whose ambition he hoped would at last be satisfied. On the 10th of

**The Kingdom  
of Italy.**

December, 1804, he offered to make him King of Italy on condition that he renounced his right to the Imperial Crown, which might perhaps set at

rest the fears of Europe. But, on the 27th of January, Joseph, after considerable hesitation, refused "to abdicate his rights as a French prince," which, he solemnly observed, had been conferred upon him "by the will of the people." Whereupon the Emperor decided to place the Crown of Italy on his own head. Eugene de Beauharnais would represent him in Milan with the title of Viceroy and the prospect of one day succeeding to this Transalpine throne. By the 17th of March, 1805, everything was settled.

This decision was big with fate. As I have already said, it

## THE FAILURE OF THE INVASION

furnished the wavering members of a possible Coalition with the pretext they required, more especially since the assumption of the Crown of Italy by Napoleon inevitably meant that Lucca, Parma and Genoa would join the Empire. Even more than the enthronement of Napoleon in Milan this seizure of fresh territory in Italy had the effect, so to speak, of suddenly crystallising the hitherto diffuse Coalition.

But these events were also remotely responsible for a coolness springing up in the relations between the Emperor and the Court

**The Pope's Anxiety.** of Rome. Even when he left Paris, Pius VII's ardour had been considerably damped. He had remained in Paris until the 13th, and but for a

few somewhat vexatious incidents, had been overwhelmed until the very end with kindness and attention. But when it came to discussing with the Emperor the demands entrusted to him by the Curia and the returns the latter expected from his journey, Napoleon, though graciousness itself, had met them, if not with a formal refusal, at all events with a denial that Rome had any claim. Thus the Pope had left Paris laden with Gobelin tapestries and Sèvres vases, but otherwise empty-handed. He found the Curia awaiting him in an extremely acrimonious frame of mind, and the anti-French party in Rome regained strength.

According to Thiers, the Emperor should have taken care to avoid this. He was shortly to enter Italy, to be crowned with the Iron Crown and assume the position of suzerain over the whole country. Surely Rome had good reason to feel alarmed!

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This visit to Italy was to be used as a cloak for other enterprises. For Napoleon was still engaged in planning and re-planning the invasion of England. The Army was ready in the neighbourhood of Boulogne, but the whole problem was now centred in the colossal naval venture. Unfortunately, the

**Instructions to the Fleets.** Emperor was no longer dealing with Latouche-Tréville, an enthusiastic and resolute man, but with Villeneuve, who was timorous and dilatory.

Throughout December and January, the latter had been declaring that it was impossible to do anything, as he was shut up, according to his own reports, by contrary winds in

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Toulon. Meanwhile, the plan had been finally matured; it is given in full detail in the letter written by the Emperor to Admiral Ganteaume on the 11th Ventôse (the 2nd of March). Villeneuve was to leave the Mediterranean, to pick up the Spanish fleet commanded by Gravina on his way, and Missiessy's squadron off Rochefort, and thus reinforced to sail before the wind in the direction of the Antilles, where he would make a feint of attacking the English colonies. Meanwhile, Nelson, already decoyed away on a false scent to the middle of the Mediterranean, would set sail for the Antilles, followed no doubt by Cornwallis, now off Brest. The blockade of Brest would thus be raised, and Ganteaume would be able to come out and for forty-eight hours close the entrance to the Channel. Under his protection the invasion would take place. Napoleon urged Villeneuve to move; there are a score of letters giving the details of this formidable venture, all the weapons for which were at the disposal of the Emperor, although, unfortunately, they were not so easy to handle as those furnished by his armies. Nevertheless, he relied on the engagement taking place between the 30th of March and the 1st of June. The visit to Italy, which he intended to be short and sweet, would put England off the scent.

He reached Milan on the 10th of May, and went to the Cathedral in full pomp and ceremony. Here, he took the iron Crown of the Kings of Lombardy, presented long ago to Charlemagne, and placed it on his own head. "Dio mi la diede, qua' a chi la toccherà" (God hath given it to me; woe to him that toucheth it) were the words inscribed upon it. The King-Emperor, as he crowned himself, pronounced this inscription on the Iron Crown in a loud voice. The words, coming from his lips, were endowed with their full significance.

For one brief moment Italy was convulsed by the thrill which she had already felt, from Milan to Naples, at the time of the proclamation of an "Italian Republic." A King of Italy had been consecrated! "A great people was awakened," wrote Chateaubriand, "and for a moment opened its eyes." Italy rose from her slumbers and remembered her genius as it were a divine dream." The Genoese, with their Doge at their head, begged that their city might be incorporated in the Empire, and the union was proclaimed. The annexation of Parma and Piacenza, who came

## THE FAILURE OF THE INVASION

forward with a similar offer, was postponed, but Lucca and Piombino were turned into a principality for the Princess

**Annexations in Italy.** Elise and bound by close ties of vassalage to the Empire. As soon as everything was settled,

Napoleon installed Eugene in Milan, where he was to "hold a court" and administer Italy "in the King's name." To Talleyrand was entrusted the somewhat ticklish task of presenting all these transactions to Austria in the light best calculated to make her accept them as calmly as could be expected.

The Emperor was no longer labouring under any illusions with regard to England, although he expected to have done with her

**The Naval Plans Miscarry.** before long. But his naval plan was only half realised. Villeneuve did indeed get as far as leaving the Mediterranean, and after picking up Gravina and his

fleet at Ferrol, had actually sailed in the direction of the Antilles, whither Missiessy had preceded him. But the English, perhaps duly informed by the treacherous letters that were being sent out from the Tuileries, seemed to be in no way perturbed. They remained off Brest, where Ganteaume was still blockaded, and even went and shut up part of the Spanish fleet in Ferrol. Cornwallis continued to bar the way to Ganteaume, and allowed Nelson to leave the Mediterranean, where he had been cruising for some time, and go alone in pursuit of Villeneuve in the direction of the Antilles. Villeneuve had now been ordered to return towards Ferrol and raise the blockade of the Spanish port, where he was to pick up the rest of the Spanish fleet and bear down on Brest, raise the blockade there and allow Ganteaume, somewhere about the beginning of August, to carry out the task with which, as we know, he had been entrusted. The Emperor continued to urge on Villeneuve, who he knew was getting into hopeless difficulties, sending him ever more urgent letters every day—the "destruction" of England lay in the Admiral's hands, he declared. But was Europe going to give Napoleon time to "destroy" England?

**Formation of the Coalition.** The Coalition had been virtually formed on the 11th of April by means of a secret agreement between Russia and England—the St. Petersburg Convention—which marks a turning-point in the history of the next eight years.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Ever since the close of 1804, the Tsar, as we know, had been openly drifting from the position of a mediator by no means

### The Tsar's Policy.

friendly to France towards that of becoming a formal ally of England, but he was anxious to drag the rest of Europe in his wake by offering them the prospect of arranging continental affairs in a manner as unfavourable as possible to France. He had accordingly partially adopted a plan of reconstruction, submitted to him by a certain Abbé Piatoli, which seemed calculated to whet the appetite of the other Powers. France, as a matter of fact, was to be allowed to keep her "natural boundaries," but Italy, Holland and Switzerland were to be freed from her suzerainty. True, England was to restore Malta to the Knights. Such were the outlines of the original plan. As I have already said, the Tsar had presented it to London through one of his young friends, Novossilzoff. Pitt made a show of considering it, but introduced such drastic alterations as completely to alter its character. He declared that Prussia must be associated in the scheme and, as an inducement, was prepared to offer her the left bank of the Rhine, which at once did away with the famous "natural boundaries" for France. On the other hand, it was not surprising to find that the evacuation of Malta was completely eliminated from the plan as revised by Westminster. Then, suddenly, as Novossilzoff did not protest against these drastic modifications, Pitt put forward a straightforward offer of a regular treaty of alliance. The treaty was negotiated as soon as the changes introduced by Napoleon in Italy were made known, for the adhesion of Austria could now be hoped for, though it meant confronting her with a cut-and-dried treaty. On the 11th of April the Tsar made up his mind and signed, together

### The Convention of St. Petersburg

with the representative of England, that Convention of St. Petersburg which, eight years before the events of 1813, revealed what the real aim of Europe was as early as 1805.

The treaty consisted of seven open clauses and two secret clauses. The aim of the Coalition was "to restore to Europe the peace, independence and happiness of which she has been deprived by the inordinate ambition of the French Government." The conditions for this were the evacuation of Hanover by the French troops, the complete independence of Holland and Switzerland,

## THE FAILURE OF THE INVASION

the restoration of his States to the King of Sardinia, and the enfranchisement of Italy, whose future fate was not specified. So much for the open clauses, which were to be presented to

The  
"Bases" of  
1805.

Napoleon as providing "the bases of peace." If, as was highly probable, he refused to accept them, they would be modified and made even more unfavourable to France. If the Convention is

studied in the light of the instructions given to Novossilzoff, it at once becomes apparent that it was not merely a matter of shutting up France within her natural boundaries such as Paris conceived them to be. In Novossilzoff's instructions we find the following :

"these points cannot be fully secured (this refers to the open clauses) unless the boundaries of France consist of the Moselle, the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees." But this meant that by depriving her of the huge slice of Rhineland territory situated between the Moselle and the Rhine, she would also be deprived of Savoy, which was destined for Switzerland, and probably also, if Prussia lent her support, of the left bank of the Rhine, which would be handed over to the latter. Without actually specifying it, this really meant that France was to return to her old boundaries

of 1789. And, of course, after she had been reduced in this way, the allies were to round off their own possessions. England was to keep her new acquisition of Malta, while the Tsar was to be rewarded by slices of Poland which Prussia would abandon to him in return for the Rhineland. Lastly, by one of the secret

clauses, the Coalition reserved to itself the right of imposing a change of Government on France. This already foreshadowed the whole history of 1814. Moreover, needless to say, in spite of

the Tsar's original intentions, England refused for a single moment to entertain the idea of introducing even the slightest modification into the maritime code which would infringe the "principles" securing Great Britain the mastery of the seas. In fact, the long and short of it was, that the plans, which were supposed to curb "the inordinate ambitions of France for the sake of the happiness of Europe," turned out to be merely a means for satisfying the "inordinate ambitions" of one or two other countries, and the St. Petersburg Convention, while ostensibly directed against what would to-day be called French imperialism, merely tended towards securing the triumph of Russian imperialism on the



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Continent and of English imperialism at sea. Such will always be the nature of grand "schemes of pacification."

Nevertheless, the support of Austria and Prussia was indispensable. The former was prepared to give it; but she was not prepared to make war immediately and did not yet dare to throw off the mask. Prussia, for her part, took refuge in vague phrases which Austria used as a pretext for postponing her formal adhesion.

Without waiting, the Tsar had the gross presumption to insist on presenting to Napoleon, as the sequel of the famous offer of mediation of 1804, the "conditions of peace" required by the Convention of the 11th of April. Novossilzoff himself was to be sent to Paris and the French Government was requested to provide him with passports. Extremely anxious to avoid, or, for the time being, to postpone the outbreak of war on the Continent, and considering the granting of the request merely as a means of renewing relations with Russia, the Emperor had the passports sent.

Meanwhile, the Tsar, who entertained no doubts as to the manner in which Napoleon would receive the famous "bases of peace," urged Austria to give her support to the Convention.

Adherence  
of Austria. Vienna regarded the annexation of Genoa as the last straw, and, although her Ambassador in Paris pretended to accept "the Italian settlements,"

Austria, on the 9th of August, at last consented to support the St. Petersburg Convention of the 11th of April. Whereupon, Alexander, who imagined he had now won the game, felt it was no longer necessary to restore diplomatic relations with Napoleon, and he ordered Novossilzoff, who was waiting in Berlin, to tear up his passports. Thus Napoleon never even knew what the famous "bases" were, but he felt that a storm was brewing.

He immediately set to work to examine every possible contingency, and to think out fresh plans in Boulogne, whither he had once again returned.

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Nevertheless, he still hoped that the arrival of the fleets would make the invasion possible. But Villeneuve, even at this early hour, was reduced to a state of despair. As I have already said,

## THE FAILURE OF THE INVASION

he was a brave fighter, but the slightest incident completely demoralised him. On the 2nd of August he had entered Ferrol, after having gained a substantial advantage over the English, but he had shut himself up there a prey to some vague panic. When called upon to act, he merely raised objections, and if he consented to move, added, "Heaven knows what I shall do!" The sight of the Spanish vessels, which were in a deplorable condition, was quite enough to make him wish to throw up the sponge. While he was hesitating in this way, Napoleon was writing urging him not to lose a moment, but to enter the Channel with the allied fleets. "England lies at our mercy!" he declared.

Meanwhile, however, having almost abandoned hope of ever setting eyes on Villeneuve, and duly informed by Talleyrand of all that was going on in Europe, the Emperor was working out his "alternative plan." He dictated to Talleyrand the ultimatum that he was to address to Austria, while he had already ordered Gouvion-Saint-Cyr to fall upon Naples at the first sign of hostility on the part of the "hussy" who occupied the throne of that city.

On the 22nd of August, Napoleon was informed by Decrès that Villeneuve, after having hesitated as to which of various alternatives he should adopt, had finally decided to shut himself up in Cadiz. Thus the naval plan of campaign had definitely failed and with it "the invasion." The Emperor gave way to a sudden access of fury. "The wretch! What outrageous behaviour!" he exclaimed. But an hour later he summoned Daru, Intendant-General of the Army, and with unexampled firmness and precision, dictated to him the whole plan for the rapid transfer of the Boulogne armies against Germany. He all but arranged the precise moment at which the first shot was to be fired and the day on which the French armies were to enter Vienna. His reaction to his most recent disappointment was to show himself more than ever before master of his fate. And fifteen years later Daru was still "speechless with admiration."

**Villeneuve Fails the Emperor.**

**Napoleon's Alternative Plan.**

The fact was that, for the last fortnight, the Emperor had been burying his head in maps of Germany, and was already, to use one of his favourite expressions, defeating his enemies in his mind's eye. On the 22nd of August he wrote to Talleyrand: "I have

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

this minute turned my guns round. . . . What they least expect is the rapidity with which I can make my two hundred thousand men right-about face." He had signed treaties with Württemberg and Bavaria; Murat had already taken his departure for Germany; Masséna had been sent to Italy to help Eugene, whose military experience was all too meagre, and who had been given the classic mission of creating a diversion in the Alps. On the 4th of September Napoleon returned to Paris, where his Ministers were staggered by his assurance. "By the 12th of October Austria will be torn to bits!" he declared. He forced Gallo, the Neapolitan Minister, to sign a treaty of neutrality which, although it was ratified by Maria Carolina, did not prevent that lady from intriguing with the other Powers, "whom," she wrote, "she was impatiently waiting upon." But Gouvion-Saint-

The Army  
Turned  
Against  
Germany.

Cyr was on the spot to prevent and punish any act of treachery. Furthermore, the Emperor's hopes were centred in the incomparable army which he was about to hurl like a "thunderbolt" into the valley of the Danube, and which was to deal the knock-out blow to Vienna.

Incomparable, indeed, was the army which for the last year he had been fashioning and re-fashioning. "The dough is good," he had remarked to Dumouriez as early as the eve of Valmy; but what would he have said of the dough, kneaded in the meantime over and over again, which, as the Emperor Napoleon, he now had at his disposal—soldiers of the Revolution tanned in a hundred battles, but now for the first time given by their great leader a cohesion they had hitherto lacked. "In the old days," he observed to Roederer, "we had the Army of the Rhine, the Army of Italy, and the Army of Holland; there was no such thing as a French Army. But now we have it and we shall see what it can do." With cadres composed of veterans, the raw recruits, who had looked so dejected on their first arrival in Boulogne, were not only trained for war by constant exercise, but were also impregnated with the military spirit. Their letters prove that they were burning to "receive their baptism of fire." Their leaders were almost all of them young men. The average age of the 141 general officers was only forty; Marshals of thirty-seven were in command of Divisional Commanders of thirty-five. Added to

## THE FAILURE OF THE INVASION

this both rank and file were filled with faith, a most important consideration—faith in the superiority of France and faith in the genius of the great man who was their leader. And Napoleon knew it. He too had faith—faith in himself, but above all in the men under his command. Moreover, he was confident of success. “I am going to cut the Gordian knot!” he declared. He had examined the sword he held; the temper of the weapon was ten times superior to that of the best armies that had hitherto existed.

The Allies had worked out a magnificent plan of operations by which their troops were to be hurled against all the frontiers of France. Napoleon knew all about them, but was not perturbed. He was interested only in the match that was to be played on the upper Danube. It was here that he had long since made up his mind to attack. “The incomparable Mack,” as he was called in Vienna, who was in command of the bulk of the Austrian forces, had no conception of the mighty power that was rushing out

against him. “My seven torrents,” the Emperor called them; they were the seven corps under the command respectively of Bernadotte, Marmont, Davout, Soult, Lannes, Ney and Augereau, 186,000 men, who were to sweep down on the foe, not to mention the eighth “torrent,” Murat’s 44,000 horse who had been sent on ahead. While, under the Emperor’s own hand, yet another “torrent” was held in reserve—the new Imperial Guard, which was already worth two army corps.

Mack had invaded Bavaria. The French forces were to converge on Ulm and, with Mack swept aside or annihilated, they were to make a rush for Vienna, where Francis II “would not be able to celebrate Christmas.”

On the 27th of August the order to advance was given and everything began to move. “Time presses, the days are years,” wrote Napoleon, and everybody heard him. He communicated the fire which was consuming him to the Headquarters Staffs, the regiments and the heart of every soldier. In Paris people remarked that the Emperor was not only supremely serene, but also buoyantly joyful. He looked as though he had already won the battle, which, as a matter of fact, as far as he was concerned, was indeed the case.

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## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Paris required this example of optimism, for the Emperor found the spirit of his capital almost morbid. Public opinion, filled with consternation by the war, was in a state of ferment. The extremists had recovered hope and the Royalists were everywhere circulating Louis XVIII's protest, dated from Calmar on the Baltic, against the Consecration. The prospect of war in Europe aroused hopes of a civil conflict. The West, where Fouché had just suppressed a vast conspiracy spreading from Nantes to Bordeaux in one direction and to Normandy in the other, was once more to become the scene of countless intrigues. True, the Minister of Police assured his master that he could nip any outbreak of civil disturbance in the bud ; but Fouché himself was being approached by Royalists anxious to win him over to their side (I have given the facts elsewhere), and though he promised to protect the Emperor against troubles at home, who, in the event of defeat, would be able to protect the Emperor against Fouché ?

Around Napoleon himself other intrigues were also afoot, and he was once again in an extremely precarious position. There were some who almost wished him dead, for, wrote one foreign representative, "certain friends of order and of wise counsels imagine that the blessings bestowed by Providence would be completed if the death of Napoleon were to place Prince Joseph in his place." Nobody could swear that this was not the opinion of Prince Joseph himself and of his whole faction. People in Paris even wrote to Lucien to tell him that the Master was guilty of one "imperial folly" after the other.

Business men, menaced with heavy losses by the war, were extremely discontented. Worse still, credit suffered one final blow—the Minister of the Treasury, whose arrangements with the "United Merchants" and Ouvrard's colossal intrigues had placed in a very tight corner, had pledged the Treasury to this shady financier, and in order to meet the stupendous obligations

he had incurred at the hands of these speculators, Financial Crisis. had turned to the Bank of France. To satisfy his demands, the latter had been obliged to triple and eventually to quadruple its issue of bank-notes, which, though sound enough but a short while back, soon began to decrease in value. The advances to the Treasury suddenly rose from 30 to

## THE FAILURE OF THE INVASION

150 millions and then to 274, the number of bank-notes also rapidly increased from sixteen to forty, and eventually to seventy-six millions. All this was directly opposed to the ideas of Napoleon, who, only a few years previously, had not hesitated to write that by inflating the issue of bank-notes "the Bank would be uttering counterfeit coin." Unfortunately, for some weeks past, Ouvrard's machinations had partially escaped the Emperor's notice, absorbed as he was in his preparations for war; but the public had got wind of the matter. Furthermore, the rumour was spread that the Emperor had demanded from the Bank the delivery of huge sums from the gold reserve to finance the opening of hostilities and the payment of the troops. Suddenly panic broke out; the public made a rush on the Bank to cash their notes, and, owing to the restrictions it was obliged to make, the institution lost credit every day. This situation, as we shall see, lasted for months.

It was already contributing towards the dislocation of business and the cooling of public enthusiasm. Napoleon was surprised; but, confident of victory, he relied, as he had done on the eve of Marengo, on the issue of battle settling everything, both the financial and the political crisis. When he referred to the "Gordian knot," he was not thinking only of European affairs. "The finances are in a bad state, and the Bank is in difficulties," he observed to Mollien; "but I cannot restore order by staying here." On the following day he took his departure, certain of extracting from his vanquished foe, not only provinces, but also the gold of which he stood in need, and of restoring order, not only abroad, but also at home, where it had been temporarily disturbed. To the country he addressed a proclamation superb in its assurance: "I promise you victory and swift peace." Already, at the end of the summer, he could see the sun of Austerlitz shining through the autumn mists.

**Napoleon's  
Departure.**

**SOURCES.** Works already mentioned by Aulard, Bailleu, and Pingaud. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, X and XI. *Memoirs or Reminiscences* by Roederer, Queen Hortense and Madame de Rémusat (II). Marshal Davout, *Correspondance*. Ouvrard, *Mémoires*.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel, Arthur Lévy, Driault, Masson (*Famille*, III). Lanzaç de Laborie (III, IV, VI). Masson (*Jadis*, II), Daudet, Madelin, Liesse, Gignou and Marion. Ernest Daudet, *La Police et les Chouans*.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ULM AND AUSTERLITZ

The "torrents" let loose on Bavaria. Mack in Ulm; he is surrounded; the capitulation of Ulm. The Emperor hastens to Vienna. Prussia's duplicity; the Tsar at Potsdam. The battlefield of Austerlitz; the bivouac vigil; the battle; the plateau of Pratzen; the lakes. The sun of Austerlitz. "Behold a hero!" Francis II in the victor's camp. Haugwitz, utterly confounded, signs the treaty of alliance at Schönbrunn.; The negotiation of the Treaty of Pressburg.

**S**IX of the seven "torrents" were already pouring down on Germany, with Murat's cavalry in the van, and the French forces were manœuvring to outflank Mack, who had ventured as far as Ulm, and to cut out off his divisions from the Austro-Russian Army which was being assembled in Austria and Moravia.

The  
French in  
Bavaria.

Before the Field-Marshal even knew that a single Frenchman was anywhere near him, his right wing had been outflanked near Augsburg. The Emperor, who had crossed the Rhine, arrived when his troops had already surrounded Ulm. As he advanced, he entered into various negotiations, and by means of formal treaties, induced all the Princes of southern Germany definitely to throw in their lot with him, which secured his rear and increased his forces by the addition of 20,000 Germans.

By the 6th of October, the six corps had already formed a menacing semi-circle to the north and north-east of Ulm. As soon as the Danube had been crossed an advance was made to the south to close the circle; Ney remained on the left bank, while Lannes and Murat, followed by Marmont and Bernadotte, crossed the river. A series of engagements, in which the French everywhere had the advantage, resulted in drawing the cordon ever more tightly round Ulm where Mack, still blissfully unconscious of the danger he was in, was encamped. He had already been entirely cut off from Vienna, when Ney received orders to advance on Ulm *via*

Mack  
in Ulm.

## ULM AND AUSTERLITZ

Günzburg, where he broke the enemy's resistance.

From Augsburg, Napoleon directed the encircling movements. Only one means of retreat was left open to Mack—to the south, in the direction of the Tyrol. But this was closed to him at Memmingen, and by a series of marches of unprecedented rapidity all the French troops advanced on Ulm through the melting snow and freezing mud. The Emperor rode up and down the lines, encouraging the men himself, raising their spirits and giving wings to their feet.

Mack, who had massed his 60,000 men on the Michelsberg, which dominates the town of Ulm, awaited the attack; but after hurling 25,000 of them against the French he saw them immediately swept away by Dupont's division. The Austrian Marshal, failing to see any possibility of retreat, made no further attempt, but "shut himself up in Ulm," writes Thiébault. Napoleon pressed home his advantage. Ney, at Elchingen, again drove back and almost wiped out a whole division sent out by Mack. The Emperor regarded it as done for. "Even if the devil himself were with them, they would not escape," he wrote. On the 14th of October the Field-Marshal's situation was desperate, and he abandoned all attempts to break the French line; whilst the Archduke Ferdinand, hurling himself against the circle which had already closed about him, endeavoured, with 20,000 men, to reach Bohemia *via* Nordlingen, Mack remained where he was. The French advanced to rout him out, and he had no alternative but to fight a battle lost before it was begun. Perceiving this, and called upon to capitulate, he resigned himself to his fate on the 16th. While Murat was putting to flight the column under

the Archduke Ferdinand, who managed to escape with only 2,000 men, Mack surrendered with his whole army, which, though considerably depleted by the preceding engagements, still numbered 30,000 men. On the 20th they were marched past the Emperor. In less than three weeks the latter had completely realised the first part of his plan—the main Austrian Army, numbering 80,000 men, had, without even fighting a great battle, been destroyed or captured. "I am now going to turn against the Russians," he wrote to Josephine. "They are lost!" And he was already pushing on to Vienna.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Such was the foolhardiness of Austria that the road to a large extent lay open; Braunau, the only stronghold capable of offering any opposition to the advance of the French troops, was not armed, and Kutusoff, who, with his Russians, was hastening to the relief of Mack, was seized with panic and beat a hasty retreat, leaving the way clear to Vienna. On the 6th of November the French army was in front of the Austrian capital; Lannes and Murat hurled themselves on the suburbs and, by means of a daring ruse, seized the bridges. On the 14th of November, the city having capitulated, Napoleon established the Imperial Headquarters at Schönbrunn, and the tricolour, surmounted by the golden eagle, floated from the palace of Maria Theresa. It had not taken Napoleon six weeks to carry the French colours from Mayence to Vienna.

Napoleon  
in Vienna.

At this juncture he heard that Masséna, who had won a victory at Caldiero, and another, on the 29th of October, over the Archduke Charles, was pursuing the vanquished foe through Venetia and Friuli. Sadly reduced in numbers, the Austrians were in full retreat, making in the direction of the hereditary States. The French were everywhere victorious.

Masséna  
in Italy.

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This series of brilliant successes was necessary to enable Napoleon to escape grave complications from the quarter of Prussia. Ever since the opening of hostilities, the Prussian Government had been struggling with overwhelming difficulties.

Prussia's  
Dupliety.

As far back as the 24th of May, 1804, the King had undertaken to enter into a close alliance with the Tsar in the event of the French entering Germany.

But they had only entered on being provoked by Austria. Nevertheless, Alexander urged Prussia to stand by her engagement, and, in any case, insisted on his troops being allowed to cross her territory. On the other hand, Duroc, Napoleon's envoy, had made a formal and pressing offer definitely to cede Hanover in return for an alliance which, until something better could be arranged, would take the form of allowing the French troops free access to Prussian territory. The Prussian Court had promised so much all round that there was some excuse for its not knowing

## ULM AND AUSTERLITZ

where it stood. While the King was addressing a vague reply to the Tsar, Napoleon, impatient by the delays on the part of Berlin, refused to wait any longer, and marched Bernadotte's troops through a canton of the Prussian province of Anspach, on their way to Augsburg. Whereupon, the King of Prussia pretended to be extremely angry and talked of handing the French Minister his papers. But, on the 8th of October, he learnt, through his emissaries, that Mack had allowed himself to be surrounded at Ulm, and once again fell a prey to uncertainty.

The Tsar was anxious to clinch matters and announced that he was coming to Potsdam, where he arrived on the 25th of October.

**The Tsar at Potsdam.** He relied on his personal charm to change a vacillating friendship into an active alliance. He found the Prussian Court greatly perturbed by the Capitulation of Ulm, but pretended to treat the matter lightly. The Austrians, he declared, did not know how to fight; when the French found themselves face to face with Souvoroff's hardened veterans, they would know what it meant to meet with signal defeat, more especially if, in the meantime, "Frédéric the Great's veterans" had entered the lists. Queen Louisa, who had always hated France, and detested Napoleon, brought pressure to bear on her husband. She was a worthy woman, extremely sentimental and German, married to a man of mediocre gifts, a depressing, awkward individual. She had conceived a romantic attachment—"Greek love," as the St. Petersburg *émigrés* dubbed it—for Alexander, which the young Tsar pretended to reciprocate. He also made a display of the most open-hearted friendship for the King, all of which combined to create an atmosphere. Meanwhile, the Russian Ministers, who had accompanied the Tsar, were conferring with the two Prussian Ministers Hardenberg and Haugwitz. Moreover, Count Metternich, the Austrian envoy in Berlin, was admitted to their deliberations—an extremely significant fact. The Prussians, however, still refused to commit themselves, but put forward an offer of mediation which, indeed, would have been so much in favour of the Allies that the Tsar and Metternich did not take long to support the suggestion. The treaty was signed at Potsdam on the 3rd of November. The open clauses, which were to be communicated to Napoleon, conferred the rôle of mediator on the

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

King of Prussia, who was to demand from France the renunciation of all further action in Italy, Switzerland, Holland and Germany. If Napoleon refused, or had not answered within the space of a month, Prussia, as arranged in the secret clauses of the treaty, was to march against him with 180,000 men "until such time as the enemy, driven back to the left bank of the Rhine, allowed Prussia to contrive and concert measures proper to the existing state of affairs." Russia promised Prussia, who did not wish to lose the substance for the shadow, to persuade England to give her Hanover.

But the Berlin Cabinet had always been sly and artful. They proceeded to make preparations for armed intervention, but took their time in the hope that events in Austria would turn out in accordance with the wishes of the Allies, and that all Prussia would be called upon to do would be to hasten up to the rescue of the victors. They kept the Tsar on tenterhooks by their dilatory proceedings, but, at last, on the 23rd of November, Frederick William wrote to him, saying, "Your Majesty can rely on my firmness." Napoleon felt the danger and pointed it out to Talleyrand; but he counted on forestalling it all by a victory which would certainly put an end to any warlike inclinations on the part of Prussia.

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On the 17th of November, Napoleon had left Vienna for Znaym, in Moravia, where Kutusoff, with his Russians, had rallied the bulk of the Austro-Russian forces. Alexander himself had joined Francis II with the troops, and the two monarchs were at Olmütz. Napoleon took up his quarters at Brünn. Haugwitz, who had been sent from Berlin, had informed Talleyrand that he was coming, but was once more deliberately delaying. But he could not put off his arrival indefinitely, though when he did actually reach Brünn he was accorded a markedly cold reception by Napoleon, and did not dare to reveal his mission.

The Emperor, as a matter of fact, was determined to confront him, before three days had passed, with the *fait accompli*. He had made up his mind to give battle; the Tsar, full of hope, was also anxious to fight. Both sides took up their positions. As early as

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the 20th of November the Emperor had written, " Marshal Soult is ordered to come to Austerlitz."

The Emperor was now playing for heavy stakes, and it required an unshakable faith in the strength of his military tactics for him not to be perturbed. For the whole of Europe was waiting, ready to fall upon him with her full weight unless a victory, both brilliant and decisive, prevented her. From Naples, where, on the 14th of October, Maria Carolina had welcomed to her realm 13,000 Russians from Corfu and 7,000 English who had recently disembarked there, to Madrid itself, where the wretched Godoy was determined to betray the French alliance, everything gave cause for anxiety. In France itself the discontented elements, to which I shall return presently, seemed to be increasing. Europe exaggerated their importance, and hoped, though quite without foundation, that at the first defeat France would rid herself of her new Emperor.

Moreover, sinister news, eminently calculated to diminish the effect of the victory of Ulm and to revive the hopes of Napoleon's enemies, was already being circulated throughout the Continent. The wretched Villeneuve had just put the coping-stone to his misfortunes and had led his squadron to disaster.

Having taken refuge in Cadiz, after giving the Emperor the slip, he had tried to make good his escape. On the 20th of October he had sailed with his thirty-three ships out of the Spanish port, but on his way north had fallen in with the British Admirals Nelson and Collingwood off Cape Trafalgar. Thinking he could

**Battle of  
Trafalgar.** turn his slight numerical superiority to account to surround the British squadron, he unduly lengthened his line of battle and made it perilously weak.

The mistake did not escape Nelson's eagle eye, and forming his ships into strong columns, he attacked and broke through Villeneuve's centre. The great English Admiral was killed on the bridge of his ship, the *Victory*, but there was nothing left for Collingwood to do but to complete the rout of the utterly disorganised French squadron. He seized seventeen French ships, among them Villeneuve's flagship, and made Villeneuve himself prisoner. The unfortunate wretch was subsequently given leave by England to go to France to defend himself before a court

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

martial, but, terrified by the news of the Master's wrath, he ended his lamentable venture by suicide. Napoleon had, indeed, been hard hit in his tenderest spot by a disaster which destroyed French maritime power for many a long day, and thus allowed England, now confident in her crushing superiority at sea, to hold out longer than she would doubtless otherwise have done. For the time being, at all events, the prestige of France seemed to be somewhat compromised.

True, Napoleon was determined to restore it by a victory of unprecedented magnitude over the two Emperors. Elated by the *morale* of his men, he felt certain of success.

But he made up his mind to rouse their enthusiasm to yet greater heights. And on the night of the 1st of December he made a tour of the bivouacs. The soldiers, recognising him, set fire to handfuls of straw and escorted him, with loud and passionate cheers, along the whole of the line. The little volunteer Barrès, who, like so many others, was a witness of this famous episode, trembled with enthusiasm in recalling it thirty years later. And the future Marshal Bugeaud, then a sergeant, wrote: "He promised to give us peace after this battle; and we replied with shouts of joy." The Emperor had not lied to them; he had just written, "This victory will be the end of our campaign." Thiébault saw him looking long and earnestly at the Russian camp fires: "To-morrow," he observed aloud, "that army will belong to me." Moved to the depths by the thoughts he was turning over in his mind under the star-lit sky, and even more by the frenzied cheers of the army, he returned to his tent more certain than ever of the morrow. "This is the most wonderful night of my life!" he declared.

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He had counted on the Allies taking the offensive and thus playing into his hands. Their tactics were perfectly clear to him; they were obviously aiming at making themselves masters of the road from Olmütz to Vienna on the right flank of the French Army, which they hoped to turn and then envelop. Napoleon had himself encouraged their plans by ordering the village of

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Austerlitz to be evacuated. It was situated on his right wing, and he had occupied it for a time in order to draw the enemy.

The road ran north and south through fairly hilly country, intersected by the little valleys of Morava and Schwartzava, which skirt the Santon hill and the plateau of Pratzen commanding the road to the south-west. The waters draining this area run into a gently sloping plain and form sluggish streams, one of which, the Goldbach, wanders south of the plateau and loses itself in some marshes, while the other, the Littava, forms more im-

Battle of  
Austerlitz,

portant lakes to the west of the road. The Allies, masters of the heights and believing they were covered by the lakes, considered their position

secure. From it their artillery would support their advance against the right wing of the French Army—an essential operation, since the General Headquarters of the Allied Staff were situated within a stone's throw of the road, in the village of Austerlitz, which had been evacuated by order of Napoleon. But, as I have already said, the Emperor deliberately aimed at encouraging this movement of the enemy's main body on his right. As soon as they became engaged far enough along the Olmütz-Vienna road, he would seize the heights and open a murderous fire on his clumsy and foolhardy foe and cut his forces in two.

The French Army was ranged along the Goldbach, facing north at the foot of the heights. While the right, under Davout, was at first to remain on the defensive against the advance of the enemy's

left, and, if necessary, to lure him on by pretending

The  
Plateau of  
Pratzen.

to give ground, Lannes and Murat, on the left wing, were to make a vigorous attack on the Santon hill, and Soult and Vandamme, in the

centre, on the plateau of Pratzen; Napoleon was to hold the Guard in reserve.

Everything worked out according to plan. Davout, seeing Buzhōwden's Russians leaving the heights, slowly retreated, thus allowing them to gain some ground along the road and the frozen marshes through which it ran. But this meant that the heights were becoming denuded. As soon as Napoleon considered that they were sufficiently vacated he ordered Soult and Vandamme to storm the Pratzen, and in a few hours they had cleared it of all that remained of the enemy's forces. As a matter of fact, Kutusoff,

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seeing the danger, tried to recover the position, and the Imperial Russian Guard, hurled against the plateau, succeeded by a vigorous counter-attack in reinstating the Russian centre for a moment on the heights. But Napoleon, in his turn, attacked with his reserves, and after some extremely stubborn fighting, they succeeded in putting the magnificent Russian Guard to flight. All that remained of it took refuge in Austerlitz, at the foot of the hills.

With their centre thus broken, the Allies' right, under Bagration, was hopelessly cut off from their left under Buxhōwden. In the meanwhile Lannes and Murat had seized the Santon hill, which paralysed Bagration and prevented him from reinforcing the centre. The Pratzen plateau was then finally secured by the French, who followed up their advantage and threw the Russians they had dislodged back on Olmütz.

In the meantime the French batteries were taking up their position on the Pratzen and opening fire on the enemy's left, which had been unduly extended and was now cut in half. Whereupon Davout once more took the offensive, and, clearing the road, threw the enemy back in confusion into the marshes. The artillery on the Pratzen completed their discomfiture. Panic soon set in, and the whole of the enemy's left began to flounder about in the frozen marshes which gave way under their feet, while a hail of bullets descended on their heads. Those who escaped hurled themselves by thousands right into the middle of the French troops, who were now holding Austerlitz and were thus able to surround them.

At three o'clock all was over. 15,000 of the enemy lay dead and wounded on the field of battle, 20,000 had been taken prisoners, nearly all his artillery had been captured, and forty-five standards had been cast at the feet of Napoleon, whose face was radiant with joy. The two Emperors had taken flight, swept along by their disorganised troops; all that remained of Bagration's corps were in full retreat with the French close on their heels.

The Scene at Austerlitz. The battle, which had been lit up by a clear winter sun, had been won in a few hours and ended in one of those decisive victories which strike terror in the heart of the vanquished.

But it filled the victors with exaltation. The splendid proclamation of the 12th Frimaire raised the enthusiasm of the

## ULM AND AUSTERLITZ

troops almost to the point of frenzy. It closed with the famous words: "Soldiers, when all that is necessary for securing the happiness and prosperity of our country has been accomplished, I will lead you back to France. There you will be the object of my most tender solicitude. My people will welcome you with joy, and you will only have to say, 'I was at the Battle of Austerlitz,' for people to exclaim, 'Behold a hero!'"

He meant this victory gained within four short hours to win even greater renown than all those that had preceded it. The thirty-fourth bulletin of the Grand Army, entirely dictated by him, fashioned it into a glorious legend, and made the little Moravian village, utterly unknown the day before, one of the most celebrated spots in the world—*Austerlitz!*

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It was not mere lust for glory that animated him; for full advantage to be derived from the victory it had, in addition to being a brilliant rout of the enemy, to lead to the exaltation of the friends of France and the overwhelming of all her enemies.

The first to yield was Francis II. The head of the illustrious House of Austria came himself humbly enough to the advanced posts of the Corsican upstart to beg for the armistice, the terms of which the latter was in a position to dictate without parley. Napoleon received the Habsburg monarch with more affability than courtesy; he agreed to grant him an armistice provided it was regarded in the light of the first step to a swift peace. Francis had the decency to beg that his Russian allies, hotly pursued by the French, should be allowed to retire on Poland without being further harassed.

Meanwhile, Prussia, though she had taken no part in the conflict, found that she had been almost as badly defeated as Russia and Austria at Austerlitz. As late as the very eve of the battle Frederick William had again written to the Tsar telling him that "the safety of the good cause lay in his hands." Haugwitz was awaiting the issue of the battle in Vienna, where Talleyrand found him, on the 3rd of December, terrified by the result. "I saw by his face," he wrote, "that the feeling inspired in his Court was one of fear."



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And Prussia had good reason for being afraid ; for, close behind Napoleon himself, stood Talleyrand, determined to turn against her the indignation with which Berlin's " treacheries " had very rightly filled the Master. The French Minister was nursing an idea which had always loomed clearly before his mind, and which he had inherited from Choiseul and Vergennes, his tutors in diplomacy—that of an alliance with Austria. He would have liked Napoleon to spare his vanquished foe and thus turn her once and for all into a friend. Directly after the Capitulation of Ulm he had advised this policy in the famous memorandum of the 17th of October, but the reverse of the medal was to be the abasement of Prussia, who would thus have to pay more dearly than the vanquished themselves for the French victory.

Though Napoleon did not share Talleyrand's views on the subject, he was none the less determined to give Prussia a severe lesson. On the 14th he received the Prussian envoy in Maria Theresa's cabinet at Schönbrunn. Haugwitz had the effrontery to offer him his congratulations, but it was a dismal effort. " Dame Fortune has changed the destination of your congratulations," observed the Emperor sarcastically. Nevertheless, he was determined not to show any consideration for Austria, his one thought being to bind Prussia to him by fear. After having allowed him to eat out his heart with anxiety, he granted Haugwitz another interview, and after again keeping him on tenter-hooks, suddenly offered him the alliance at which Prussia had been jibbing for the last four years. She was to have Hanover, but only on condition that she there and then signed this famous treaty of alliance. This Haugwitz immediately did—making all his reservations *in petto*. This took place on the 15th of December and, from that moment, Austria was condemned to the severest treatment at the hands of her conqueror.

Even before this, the Emperor had been wanting to carry out a solemn execution before the eyes of the whole world—that of the Court of Naples. It was, indeed, an execution ; for the Neapolitan sovereigns having clearly broken their pledges, the Emperor ordered the Kingdom of Naples to be occupied, and shortly afterwards proclaimed that the House of Bourbon in the Two

## ULM AND AUSTERLITZ

Sicilies "had ceased to reign." This, in itself, was a terrible warning for the Emperor of Austria, the son-in-law of that "hussy," Queen Maria Carolina, should he show the smallest inclination not to submit to the conditions imposed by the victor.

Francis II was obliged to give way. Negotiations had been opened at Brünn, and Napoleon had forthwith demanded the heaviest sacrifices. Venetia was to be added to the Kingdom of Italy, Istria and Dalmatia were to form part of the French Empire, Vorarlberg, the Tyrol, Brixen, Trent, Passau and Augsburg were to be handed over to Bavaria, Swabia and Constance to Württemberg, Ortenau and Brisgau to Baden. The Austrian plenipotentiaries, completely thunderstruck, refused even to consider such terms. Meanwhile, Napoleon was conferring with his German allies. He recognised the right to the title of King assumed by the Electors of Bavaria and Württemberg, or rather he granted it to them, while the Elector of Baden was made a Grand Duke. To all three he promised the provinces demanded from Austria. As the latter still continued to protest, he broke up the conferences and assumed a menacing attitude. Austria was obliged to submit, and on the 26th signed at Pressburg the treaty

The  
Treaty of  
Pressburg.

which deprived her of four million subjects and fifteen million florins of revenue. Napoleon, who had furthermore demanded a war indemnity of a hundred millions, in the end consented to accept fifty. But he refused to give way to the entreaties of Francis II on behalf of the Neapolitan Bourbons—the "hussy" was to be overthrown.

On the 15th the Emperor set out for Paris, stopping at Munich, where he was present at the marriage of the Princess Augusta, the daughter of the new King of Bavaria, to Eugene de Beauharnais. On the 26th he again entered his capital; in less than three months he had raised the new imperial throne and his own prestige to the giddiest heights.

SOURCES. Works already mentioned by Aulard and Bailleu. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XI. Murat's Letters, III. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Thiébauld and the volunteer Auguste Barrès. Coignet, *Cahiers*. Bugeaud's Letters.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Sorel, Arthur Lévy, Driault and Vandal (*Napoléon et Alexandre*). Colonel Colin, *La Campagne de 1805* (3 volumes). Gachot, *La troisième campagne d'Italie, 1805-1806*. General Bonnal, *Vie militaire du Maréchal Ney*.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

The Emperor's return. His displeasure. Aggravation of the financial crisis. The "gossip" of the Faubourg Saint Germain. The news of Austerlitz. Fall of Barbé-Marbois; the "United Merchants" forced to disgorge. The Ministry of General Police during the campaign; Fouché strikes a blow at the salons. Revival of the elements of the Right. The Clergy. The Government. Cambacérès; Talleyrand; Fouché; the other Ministers; glorified Civil Servants. The Secretariat of State; Maret. The Council of State; the new crew; Napoleon in the Council. The Assemblies eclipsed. Finance. The Codes. Public Education; the University of France. The administration; the Prefects. The "real presence." The Emperor at the switchboard.

**A** FEW hours after his arrival the Emperor summoned the Arch-Chancellor to the Tuileries, and after him the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Police, who found him extremely displeased. He insisted on being given a detailed account of disquieting incidents which, during his absence, had disturbed public opinion and almost ruined the country's credit.

The  
Emperor's  
Return.

It will be remembered that when he set out for Germany he had left the Treasury and the Bank in the throes of a serious financial crisis and that, on being given a somewhat superficial explanation of the causes for it by the Minister of the Treasury, he had relied on victory to put matters right.

But, far from subsiding, the crisis had been aggravated during the following weeks. Barbé-Marbois had continued to allow Ouvrard and his "United Merchants" to have a finger in the affairs of the Treasury, which, through his incredible stupidity, had gradually been allowed to get completely into their power. This had led to a most perilous state of affairs. Gaudin even went so far as to write that, if Napoleon had lost the struggle in Germany and had been obliged to recross the Rhine, he

Aggravation  
of the  
Financial  
Crisis.

## THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

would not have found a million in the coffers for the defence of the country. Enlightened during the course of the campaign, the Emperor wrote to say he thought Barbé-Marbois "must have gone mad," and that as soon as he returned to Paris he would put everything right.

We have already described the effect the embarrassment of the Treasury had had on the Bank. A panic had rapidly ensued the effects of which had spread to commerce and industry. The Banque Récamier, an extremely important institution, had suspended payment on the 10th of November, which, according to the Prefect of Police, "had spread consternation in the market." Ever larger crowds had collected outside the Bank, and regular riots had broken out, until at last Fouché, without, however, having recourse to violence, had put a stop to the agitation.

Many suspected that all this was not merely the result of some blunder on the part of the Minister of the Treasury, but that the parties of the Opposition had had a finger in the pie. In any case malevolent "gossip" in the salons had helped to spread the

panic. Public opinion was deeply perturbed, and even the glorious news of the Capitulation of Ulm had not served to set its fears at rest. Extremely acrimonious insinuations were rife, more particularly in the hostile salons of the Faubourg Saint Germain, and were also circulated among Re-

publicans who had not rallied well to the support of the Government. Was not Senator Garat, who was one of their number, writing to another malcontent, the ex-tribune Ginguéné, that "the rapid and easy march of the Emperor on Vienna . . . was not helping to lighten the gloom" . . . and emphasising "the disaster suffered by the French fleet off Cadiz," which meant "the destruction of the whole French Navy for many a long day to come"? True, he admitted that at Ulm "a great many Austrians had been killed," but he pointed out "that the Austrians had also killed a great many Frenchmen." At the other end of the scale, the Comte de Narbonne, an old Minister of Louis XVI, riddled the *régime* and its ruler with his barbed arrows, and these cruel *lazzi* were bandied about from one salon to the other.

The news of Austerlitz, it is true, immediately improved the situation. Among the populace it inspired "a delirious out-

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

burst of joy," and forced the alarmists, whether ill-intentioned or not, to hold their tongues. The thirty-fourth bulletin, which was read everywhere, raised the general enthusiasm to almost frenzied heights.

The News of  
Austerlitz.

"What a man!" wrote one fair Parisian. "Your son will certainly have great difficulty in understanding how Cæsar and Alexander could ever have been regarded as great men when he comes to compare them with this giant." The Bourse, which for the last three months had been extremely slack, greeted the victory by a rise of eight points in *rentes*. But, more than anything else, it was the expected return of the Emperor which, alike on the Bourse and in the factories, suddenly restored serenity to faces but lately lined with care. As early as the 7th of November, long before Austerlitz, one correspondent had written: "If only by some miracle, the Emperor could be in the heart of Paris for a fortnight I shouldn't mind betting that after the first week his presence alone would be sufficient to relieve the Bank of all embarrassment and to stop the depreciation of the notes." What, then, must it have been when, in January, he returned covered with laurels, crowned with a glorious peace, and laden with fifty millions seized from the coffers of the vanquished foe!

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Cambacérès, summoned to the Emperor's presence on the 26th of January, was the first to enlighten him about all that had been going on, and the efforts he made to pacify him were entirely fruitless. On the 27th, Napoleon called a meeting of the Ministers of Finance, the Treasury and the Police, and sent for the three financiers, Ouvrard, Vanlenbergh and Després, on whom, as soon as the conference was over, he intended to impose the severest penalties. Barbé-Marbois tried to justify himself, but the Emperor cut him short, and with impeccable lucidity summed up the long sequence of mistakes of which the Minister had been guilty. To put the matter right he was going to force the three

Fall of  
Barbé-  
Marbois.

"knaves" who had abused his confidence to disgorge. Meanwhile, he deprived him of his portfolio, which he intended to hand over to Mollien. He then had the three unfortunate financiers brought in, and when Ouvrard had the barefaced

## THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

audacity to attempt submitting further "interesting" propositions to him, his indignation withered him up. The three men would be sent to Vincennes and prosecuted unless, of their own

free will, they undertook to return all their ill-gotten gains. They gave way. On the 7th of February Napoleon was able to write to Joseph that he "had made a dozen rogues disgorge." Public opinion applauded this sentence, which resulted in restoring eighty-seven millions to the

Treasury. Before a month had passed the bank-note had recovered, and before long people wrote saying they "preferred it to coin." This was a victory of which Napoleon was quite as proud as of his triumphs in war.

But he was far too wide awake to stop at this. Never, he declared, would confidence have been undermined if public opinion had remained sound. Who had tampered with it? This was the question which, at their very first interview, he had put to Fouché.

During the last year Fouché had acquired extraordinary prestige. In a few months he had succeeded in so reorganising the police that he had brought the machine entrusted to his care to the

**Fouché's  
Activities  
during the  
Campaign.**

highest pitch of perfection. In Brittany he had completely ruined the Anglo-Royalist organisation, and at the moment he was engaged in hunting down one of the most active of the Bourbon agents, the ex-Chouan Lahaie Saint-Hilaire, whom

he shortly afterwards captured; while throughout the West he had succeeded in maintaining perfect order during the Emperor's absence. Meanwhile, by inundating the whole of Europe with his secret emissaries he was spreading consternation among the Anglo-Royalist agencies from Hamburg to Madrid. It had given him a certain pleasure to feel that his intervention had been necessary to put a stop to the disturbances caused by the Bank crisis. And already he was assuming such an important position in the public eye that even in Bourbon circles it began to be whispered that nothing could be done without the help of "Monsieur Fouché."

Nevertheless, he was still loyal to his political policy, which was to prevent counter-revolution from raising its head once more under the monarchy that had been born of the Revolution. But

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

though endeavouring to prevent anything that savoured of reaction, he made it his object, while forming useful personal ties with the Faubourg Saint Germain, to put obstacles in the way of too rapid a reconciliation of the representatives of the *Ancien Régime* with the new order, which he felt there was some danger of their appropriating to themselves and thus eventually corrupting.

When Napoleon, immediately on his return, had asked Fouché whose gossip it was that had helped to undermine public confidence, he had not hesitated to reply, "The Faubourg Saint Germain." And when called upon to name the

### He Strikes a Blow at the Salons.

salons which had been most guilty in this respect, he immediately denounced five, and at the command of the Master, whom he had thus provoked,

drew up a short proscription list. Thus it was "by order of His Majesty" that, on the 2nd of February, he notified about fifteen well-known aristocrats of the *Ancien Régime*, including the Comte de Narbonne, that they must retire to a distance of at least thirty-five miles from the capital. This sentence of exile, which, however, could not be regarded as unduly severe and was rescinded before very long, according to the Minister's report "spread consternation among the supporters of the Bourbons."

Nevertheless, the Emperor had no intention of supporting Fouché's policy in this connection. He did not wish a whole category of Frenchmen still to be treated as a pariah class and would not even agree to their holding aloof from public life of their own accord. And though doubtless he had no idea of changing the system, he was resolved that the *émigrés* who had left their country some while back should be encouraged not only to return to France, but also once more to play a part in the national life. He felt that if they were detached from the Bourbons, they would rally not only to the support of the new throne, but also, in a certain measure, to that of the principles on which that throne was founded. He was above all determined that they

### Revival of the Elements of the Right.

should "take root" in the new society, and it was this system of "fusion" that from this time onwards he eagerly advocated and defended.

As early as 1805, the Republican Paul Louis Courier wrote with some bitterness that the old *émigrés* were

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"honoured and cherished" by the Emperor. This was a gross exaggeration. As the Emperor stated in a letter to Cambacérès, all he wished to do was to make a career once more possible for "those whom the circumstances of the Revolution had driven from their native land." He regarded this as being merely the logical development of the policy of the Consulate.

Thus approached, the old Royalists hesitated and were torn in two. Even those who were most loyal to their principles were obliged to express their regret. "Alas, my son," said the Comte d'Haussonville to his son, "what a man! What a pity he is not the rightful King!" And nearly all of them, even—or rather I should say above all—some of those who had been most closely in touch with the unfortunate Princes in exile shared this sentiment. But a great many had already gone much further; a certain number had made up their minds, and between 1804 and 1807 the majority followed their example.

Furthermore, the Church encouraged them. The episcopate continued to show a devotion, occasionally amounting almost to adulation, for the "restorer of the altars," the prelates of the *Ancien Régime* frequently displaying even greater ardour than the "new Bishops." At their head was Boisgelin, who, after having preached at the consecration of Louis XVI, was now proclaiming the "legitimacy" of the new régime. As a matter of fact, Napoleon encouraged their zeal by means of constant benefits conferred, and though he was ready to show his disapproval of any act of intolerance or of fanaticism reported to him by Fouché, he was even more inclined to carry out any suggestions made to him by Portalis, the Minister of Public Worship who, though a Gallican and a Liberal, was a Catholic, and the wisest of protectors the Church of France could possibly have found in the Government. The Emperor was delighted with "his" clergy, and he wrote to one Prefect who had shown a want of respect to his Bishop, telling him that he ought not to forget "how well the clergy had served the State on all important occasions." In fact, although at the beginning of 1805 he had again refused Pius VII's request to have Catholicism proclaimed the State religion, he acted almost as though he had actually done so; he forced his Prefects to take part in processions, and when one of them pleaded as an excuse that he was a



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Protestant, he replied that this made it all the more imperative for him to attend such functions.

He was urged in this direction by a whole party which, gathering round Fontanes, were not only in favour of a return to the traditional religion, but also of a close alliance between the new Throne and the Altar. This party, even more than the clergy themselves, alarmed Fouché and his friends. As the matter of fact, the Emperor was somewhat amused by the fears of the late member of the Oratory ; he had no wish to put his Minister in the wrong, however, and least of all to sacrifice him to the antipathy of Monsieur de Fontanes, being resolutely determined to remain the supreme arbiter and not to allow any party to gain the upper hand in his Government.

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This Government was only just beginning to settle into the saddle, and perhaps it would be as well to examine it a little more closely.

Properly speaking there was no "Government" except the Emperor himself. There was no such thing as a Cabinet.

The Emperor regarded each of his Ministers  
**The Government.** as a sort of glorified Civil Servant, who had to obey orders and was confined to his own department. If a matter arose which concerned several of them, the Master would call them together, but only in order to make one check the other. He never allowed any one of them to play a paramount part.

True, the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérés presided over the Government in the absence of the Emperor, who, moreover,  
**Cambacérés.** always consulted him first on any matter of importance. This undoubtedly gave the ex-Second Consul quite a privileged position. But his political influence should not be exaggerated. Napoleon valued his somewhat cold discretion, which was in keeping with his physical attributes—he was a handsome man, portly and heavy, with regular features and a grave manner which a trifle was apt to transform into one of portentous solemnity. Extremely egotistic, and full of airs of lofty affability, he was always agreeable and obliging to the Emperor without in any way demeaning himself or allowing his dignity to suffer. He had a remarkable dexterity in

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dealing with anything that came his way, and while he was unequalled as a lawyer he was also a clever politician and had a gift for making the most exceptional measures appear perfectly legal. It was this dexterity which the Emperor prized above all in this stately quinquagenarian; he seemed to be the only man who could rise above dissensions, parties and factions, which was a further source of strength to the Emperor. Prudent and somewhat pusillanimous, he never cried "Wolf!" but merely insinuated it, and whenever the event proved him right he had the tact, as well as the prudence, never to boast about it.

Whatever his official pre-eminence and real influence may have been, the Arch-Chancellor was not the most prominent of the Emperor's assistants. The most conspicuous personage in the Government was undoubtedly Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord,

Talleyrand. shortly to be made Prince of Benevento, Minister

for Foreign Affairs. We already know him, for throughout his various metamorphoses he always remained the same. A *grand seigneur* who had fallen from his high estate, but still a *grand seigneur*, he exercised a strange power of fascination over the motley and largely upstart society of the Empire. In the apartments of the Tuileries there was always an eager movement of almost admiring curiosity when Talleyrand, with his impassive features, his cold eye, his insolent nose and pursed lips, always carefully powdered and elegantly dressed, limped towards the door of the Emperor's room. As the heir of the lofty policy of the old Cabinets and the only man who could speak their language to the Chancelleries of the *Ancien Régime*, he had the reputation of carrying the affairs of all Europe in his head. This made even the Emperor himself submit to the influence of this great personage.

Napoleon did not like him and despised his character. "He is a bit of ——— in a silk stocking," he used to say when he was in a bad temper. But he found him "extremely capable," which in his eyes was always a redeeming feature. Though he may not have shared all his ideas with regard to foreign policy he was always anxious to know what they were, and sometimes even encouraged him to contradict him. Talleyrand, extremely clever when it came to manipulating "principles," made only the most sparing use of them in trying to press home his ideas. The skill with which this dangerous Minister endeavoured to cir-

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cumvent him did not escape the Emperor's notice ; it amused and even delighted him. He knew how to turn this skill to his own account, though it was a two-edged sword which might one day wound him, perhaps mortally ; but for the time being he was able to wield it for his own purposes.

This crafty and illusive personage had no rival capable of disputing his power except Fouché. I will not stop long over him, for the part he played in politics after Brumaire has already made us familiar with him. Very different from Talleyrand in that

**Fouché.** he was a steady and domesticated member of the petty bourgeoisie, while the latter had always been

an aristocrat of loose morals, he nevertheless resembled him in being eaten up with ambition, though of a more restless nature, and in displaying an equal lack of principle in the realm of politics. The two men hated each other and showed it, but a similar spirit of intrigue frequently brought them together without ever reconciling them. Fouché was determined to monopolise the realm of politics, and leaving all questions of administration to his colleague of the Interior, aimed at ruling public opinion and everything else, for that matter. "The Minister of General Police," sneered Talleyrand on one occasion, "is first and foremost a man who minds his own business and after that other people's business." In his heart of hearts, Fouché would have agreed with this epigram, and the administration of his formidable but vaguely defined department enabled him to overstep the bounds of the wide powers already placed in his hands. As energetic as Talleyrand was indolent, his public reputation increased every day and he continued to rise in the Master's estimation, as a politician, that is to say. Napoleon despised his character just as he did Talleyrand's, but, as I have already observed, valued his ability. Fouché never flattered him, but treated him with an audacious frankness which he knew to be effective, for it only irritated the Master for a moment and, after due reflection, impressed him more than clumsy compliance would have done. Moreover, he had a ready turn of wit. "You voted for the death of Louis XVI," the Emperor observed to him one day, thinking to embarrass him by recalling this regrettable incident. "Quite true," replied Fouché. "It was the first service I had the occasion to perform for Your Majesty." "He was a great revolutionary, a

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man of blood," observed Napoleon on another occasion when Fouché was for the time being in disgrace; but he added almost with a sigh of regret, "He was extremely capable, though." It was the same word as he had used in the case of Talleyrand, and explains why, after he had allowed them comparative freedom and almost the rank of statesmen in a Government of Civil Servants, he was never able, when he had dismissed them, entirely to do without either the one or the other.

All their colleagues were also "capable" men, but as their personalities were not so strong they offered no resistance to the overpowering energy of the man who for them was literally the

**The Other Ministers.** "Master." Nevertheless, the Ministry of the Interior, a huge department which, as we know, dealt with the whole of the economic life of the country, required hard-headed men to run it efficiently, and Chaptal, Champagny, Crétet and Montalivet, who succeeded each other in office, were conscientious, energetic and, above all, hard-working Ministers. Portalis, the Minister of Public Worship, though perhaps not a very strong personality, at least possessed a wide experience and a profound knowledge of the law. Thibaudeau aptly described him as "a very useful instrument in strong hands." Régnier, the Chief Judge, who, with this strange title, was entrusted with the Ministry of Justice, was also a lawyer, whose past entitled him to the honour of directing the magistracy. Berthier and Decrès, respectively Minister for War and Minister of Marine, though they were both tiresome creatures, were too much under the Emperor's thumb to be anything more than distinguished officials who carried out orders without discussion. Gaudin and Mollien, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of the Public Treasury, might be described as supreme in their particular branch; they never meddled with politics, they were valuable and gifted servants possessed of wide experience, but were kept strictly to their departments by Napoleon.

"There is a great dearth of statesmen everywhere," Napoleon once sighed. "I certainly have the most capable Ministers in Europe, but if I were not there to work the machinery people would soon find out that they were not as great as they are supposed to be."

**Dearth of Statesmen.** The events that took place between 1812 and 1814 fully con-

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firmed this statement; for at a time when the Emperor was absorbed in other matters, this Government, of which, as a matter of fact, neither Fouché nor Talleyrand was any longer a member, served him extremely badly. But Napoleon had only himself to blame for not having collected more "statesmen" about him. He never expected his Ministers to be statesmen; in fact, he would actually have forbidden them to have any such aspiration. "Affairs of state," said Madame de Rémusat, "are all concentrated in the Emperor's Cabinet." And, indeed, he merely wanted able, conscientious and hard-working helpers whom he insisted on confining to their particular department, and whom he would not for a single moment have allowed to emerge and play the "statesman."

The danger might have been a certain lack of harmony in the general conduct of affairs if, during the earliest days of the Consulate, Napoleon had not forestalled it by the creation of the

The Secretariat of State.	Secretariat of State. Nothing is more interesting than to study in its own documents this same Secretariat of State, an institution which, though it did not survive the Empire, would nevertheless
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have proved most valuable even after the post of President of the Council had been created. It constituted a central office for collecting reports, bulletins and the ministerial information contained in the famous "portfolios" submitted to the Emperor, which kept him in touch with the work of the various Government offices; it also to some extent apportioned the work of the various Ministers. It was the necessary bond of union between these important but isolated servants of the State, and as everything passed through its hands it was the only institution able to connect the splendid efforts of the Ministers and combine them into powerful concerted action, and even provide them with the necessary momentum; so much so, indeed, that according to Savary, the latter were called "the head clerks of the Secretariat."

Obviously, it was imperative to have at the head of this co-ordinating Ministry a man who, more than anyone else, enjoyed the complete confidence of the Master and fulfilled his demands for

Maret.	methodical and absolutely devoted work. And Bonaparte had been happy in his choice of Hugues Maret to fill this post from the earliest days of the Consulate.
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Predestined to be a subordinate, but scrupulously conscientious in all he undertook, and extremely hard-working, he almost worshipped the Master and blindly followed his directions, not through servile complaisance but because he really believed him to be infallible. "For me his opinion is a marble pavement on which I can walk with complete security without going astray," he observed to Victor de Broglie. Talleyrand was never tired of making epigrams about Maret's "stupidity," but everything points to the fact that he regarded him as a fool only because through thick and thin he remained faithful to the end. This was a form of "stupidity" which will always remain unintelligible to a Talleyrand.

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The great machine of Government was still the Council of State. A laboratory of laws, it was also, in Napoleon's eyes, a laboratory of men. The old revolutionaries who, it will be remembered, had been appointed members of it, had, during the rule of the Consulate, developed into "magistrates," absorbed in their task of reconstruction; their sittings took the form of solemn debates rather than acrimonious discussions, and had nothing in common with the verbiage of the political Assemblies and the endless speeches from the rostrum. Their ability which, to use Napoleon's expression, had been moulded "in the fire of the Revolution," was increased by this methodical, unremitting and zealous labour.

The new crew who entered the Council after 1804, though very different in character, were quite as efficient as their predecessors; they profited by the latter's experience and conformed to a tradition which it had taken less than four years to create. While the Emperor continued to "manipulate" the lawyer Merlin de Douai, an old Jacobin who had also remained hostile to all reaction, he showed quite as great an interest in utilising Pasquier and Molé, sons of the great parliamentarians of the *Ancien Régime*, though he used slightly different terms in referring to them; he "exploited" Pasquier and "made" Molé. In addition to the Councillors, *maîtres des requêtes*,<sup>1</sup> and subsequently *auditeurs*, were

<sup>1</sup>Magistrates whose duty it was to report to the Council of State.—*Tr.*

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also appointed, young men who received their administrative training in the Council. They shared in the arduous labours of the various "sections" and were "authorised to be present at the Emperor's sessions." Standing in the recesses of the hall these young men breathlessly followed these debates and watched the great restorer coming to grips with the terrifying lawyers who had emerged from the revolutionary crucible, and their passionate interest is proved by some score of written testimonies.

Nowhere did Napoleon display a greater interest in the highest concerns of the nation than he did when he was in the bosom of the Council. He insisted on presiding over it as often as possible, but he allowed each member to express his opinion perfectly freely, and at a given moment joined in the debate with at times an intelligence to which fresh experience added day by day. "I have been present at sittings of the Council over which the Emperor presided for seven hours at a stretch," wrote Trémont, who had once been an *auditeur*. "His stimulating influence, the stupendous penetration of his analytical mind, the lucidity with which he summed up the most complicated questions, the pains he took not only to meet but actually to provoke contradiction, and the art he possessed of increasing devotion by means of a familiarity which knew the right moment at which to treat inferiors as equals, inspired an enthusiasm as great as that felt for him in the Army. Men wore themselves out with work just as on the field of battle they died for him." Molé, too, wrote that "under his hand the Council became a keyboard from which he drew sounds and harmonies due far less to the instrument than to the man who knew how to use it."

The prestige with which he thus endowed the Council contributed in no small degree to forcing the Assemblies, the Senate, the Tribunal and the Legislative Body to sink into insignificance, to which, as a matter of fact, the evolution of the *régime* itself would in course of time have inevitably condemned them. Napoleon observed of the Senate that it had been a "failure." As Thibaudeau wrote, this "ecclesiastical Chapter, this assembly of rich beneficiaries and sinecurists," merely showed dull complaisance unredeemed by virtue of any kind. "Are we never

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going to hear anything but soft and sonorous accents in these precincts ! ” exclaimed Labédoyère one day in the Luxembourg. This terrible indictment, which, as a matter of fact, stigmatised only the peers of the Hundred Days, nearly all of whom were former dignitaries of the Empire, also applies to this Assembly throughout the whole of its inglorious career.

Before two years had passed the Tribunate was doomed to inanition owing to general indifference, while, for a similar reason, the Legislative Body gained no fresh power. In fact, the Emperor was constantly talking of reducing it to the rank of an institution for registering the laws drawn up in the Council of State and even contemplated changing its name to “ *Legislative Council*.” Confronted by an extremely capable Government entirely directed by a man like Napoleon and supported by the Council of State, the only Body that was really alive, the Assemblies in 1805 gave the impression of being somewhat ridiculous shadows. In any case they never troubled the Ministers, who were thus left free from all Parliamentary interference to carry on their task of administration and government.

This Government stood high in the public estimation chiefly because the whole Administration, from top to bottom, was known to be working hard from morning to night to attain immediate results. Indeed, no government or administration has ever worked harder. “ We must earn the money France pays us,” the First Consul had declared ; and the Emperor maintained the same attitude.

In every department this Government did extremely useful work. Gaudin completed the task of restoring the finances, and

Finance. Mollien, the new Minister of the Public Treasury,

warned by the disaster that had overtaken Barbé-Marbois, kept clear of hazardous adventures and jealously saw to it that the funds raised by his colleague, the Minister of Finance, should not be frittered away in futile expenditure. The Emperor, as he himself confessed, made them “ check ” each other. He had a passion for finance—“ my most important task,” as he called it. He had the accounts of all the Government departments submitted to him in detail, and would cut down all extravagant expenditure, make strict claims on all that was due to him and insist on even stricter supervision being kept on the Treasury



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when it had been thus replenished.

And, indeed, when once means of supply had been discovered, the Emperor was determined that they should not be wasted. Extremely lavish in the matter of public works and obliged, owing to ever-recurring outbreaks of war, to incur extraordinary expenditure, he nevertheless throughout his life always preached economy and himself set the example by constantly reducing his personal expenses, in order to put by for a rainy day when his privy purse would be the country's last resource. Mollien had no need to be encouraged by this example ; a scrupulous administrator, he introduced the system of book-keeping by double entry which had not been used before his time. Moreover, the Bill for setting up the *Cour des Comptes*, which was passed in 1807, was already being drawn up. But as early as the summer of 1806 Napoleon was able to contemplate every department of the public finances with satisfaction ; in the event of complications again occurring abroad, he felt ten times safer than he had done on the eve of Austerlitz and knew that, as far as the Treasury was concerned, there was no fear of the ground slipping away from beneath his feet.

Meanwhile the work on the Codes was progressing. The Civil Code having been completed, the Council appointed to deal with The Codes. it had set to work on the Code of Civil Procedure which was nearing completion, while the Code of Criminal Procedure was being drawn up, as well as the Commercial Code—"a work," wrote the Councillor Siméon, "which requires more time than a campaign or even a war."

The organisation of public education followed a similar course. The foundation of the University of France was to be the outcome of the long and arduous debates of 1805 and 1806 Public Education. described by Barante. The Emperor's point of view was perfectly clear—the State could not be neutral ; professorial neutrality—an impossible attitude, he would have regarded as sheer hypocrisy ; the aim of the teaching given should be to mould citizens in conformity with the spirit of the institution itself. The colleges and the *lycées* were to cast the raw material of the nation, the future citizens, in this mould. "My aim," he declared in the Council, without beating about the bush, "is to have a means of guiding political and moral opinions."

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His chief aim, however, was during the course of from ten to fifteen years, to complete the famous fusion which for the last six years he had been endeavouring to secure between parties and classes. His remark about the *Prytanée de Saint Cyr* was applicable to all his *lycées* : " There must be no difference between the pupils of the establishment—equality must be the first principle of the education given in it." In 1805 Fourcroy's Bill, drafted in the Council of State, was passed. It was now no longer a question of a vague plan of national education such as those framed by men like Sieyès, Condorcet, Lakanal, Robespierre and a score of others, and so laboriously expounded from the rostrum of the Assemblies between 1789 and 1795, only to remain without practical application, but of a methodical and strict organisation fruitful of immediate results. The Central Schools founded by the Convention had accomplished nothing and public education was still non-existent in 1802 ; it was merely the ruin of an edifice that had never been used. The *lycées* had been founded as early as 1802 ; in 1806 there were twenty-six of them ; the Emperor wished to have a hundred, as well as a municipal college in every small town. Six thousand bursaries would make it possible for the children of impecunious Frenchmen to enjoy the benefits of secondary education.

The whole scheme, however, still lacked cohesion. But the law of the 10th of May, 1806, by which the University of France was founded, secured it. At its head was a Grand Master, assisted by a Supreme Council ; under him were Rectors placed in charge of the academic departments. In every important town it had under its control a *lycée* entrusted to the care of a principal, and in every small town a college directed by the head-master. The *École Normale*, founded by the Convention, but almost still-born, was resuscitated with the object of training candidates to become masters in the *lycées* and University professors. This professorial body constituted a sort of lay fraternity. For, as a matter of fact, the Emperor still had the profoundest

admiration for the old teaching Orders, the Jesuits and the Oratorians, and even went so far as to wish the masters of this new body to be celibates.

The  
University  
of France.

Thus the University was created, the last great institution of the new France ; upon it the Emperor founded

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all his hopes for the formation of that Society from which in 1805 he was still endeavouring to obtain the serious attitude towards life so essential for national discipline.

It was the Prefects, now firmly established in office, who secured this discipline in their departments. Their work might well form the subject of a special study. They

**The Prefects.** were recruited entirely from the ranks of the first revolutionaries and the representatives of the *Ancien Régime*, the latter being introduced in large numbers after 1804. At first all of them applied themselves entirely, or almost entirely, to the main task assigned to them by the First Consul—that of uniting and reconciling all the conflicting elements in the State. Here their political work ended. One of them, Baron de Trémont, who remained a Prefect under the various Governments that followed, one day bitterly complained that under these parliamentary systems “the Prefects had become mere election machines.” In 1806 this was not the case, for the simple reason that the Electoral Colleges, whose Presidents were high personages sent from Paris, voted entirely according to the latter’s bidding. Indeed, the Prefects under the Empire, released to some extent from the political obligations which their successors of to-day find so irksome, were able to devote themselves entirely to their administrative duties, which they did with such evident zeal that the favourable impression created by their work of conciliation proved lasting, and almost everywhere they were given the frequently enthusiastic support of those entrusted to their charge.

“Napoleon,” wrote one of his old officials, “almost made one believe in his *real presence*; one felt that he was actually there

**The “Real Presence.”**

in person in all the Government offices.” And the Emperor was, indeed, what Colbert described himself as being—“the great motive power.” Insisting

on everything being referred to him in the end, he also arranged for everything to find its source in him, and while he demanded strenuous work and constant activity on the part of his underlings, he set the example himself by performing prodigies of industry. “How could one possibly have shown the slightest negligence,” wrote Pasquier, one of his old assistants, “when we were set such an example of indefatigable energy in the highest quarter?” And, indeed, the “trade of King” which Louis XIV had declared

## THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

to be so "delightful" was carried on by Napoleon in its smallest details as well as in its highest obligations with a kind of voluptuous enjoyment which surpassed even that of the Great King himself. "I have got a good trade," he remarked familiarly one day to his soldiers, "I am an Emperor." And there is no doubt that he regarded his "trade" as a labour of love. When his orders reached one of his Ministers signed with that terrible signature, that sprawling "Nap" which sometimes tore the paper, "nobody dared to breathe until they had been carried out," declared Beugnot. It was thus that he succeeded in making everybody feel "his real presence." And this explains why, as early as 1806, the Empire resembled a huge modern factory in which everything is carried on by a touch from the finger of one man who sits without any appearance of anxiety or fluster in front of the switchboard and gives his orders.

SOURCES. Works already mentioned by Aulard (II), Hauterive (II), and Pingaud. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XI. *Almanach Impérial*. Fiévée, *Lettres*, II. Castellane, *Journal*, I. Notes already referred to by Pelet and Marquiset. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Madame de Rémusat (II and III), Savary, Caulaincourt, Molé, Girardin, Madame de Boigne, Madame de Staël (*Dix ans d'exil*), Queen Hortense, Prince Metternich (I), Barante (I), Broglie (I), Madame de la Tour-du-Pin, Meneval (II), Beugnot, Baron de Trémont (III), Baron Sers, Roederer (III), Chaptal, and Gaudin.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Sorel (VII), Lanzac de Laborie (IV and VI), Liesse, Herriot, Madelin, Masson (*Famille*, III), Gignoux, Marion, Gabory, Dejean and Levasseur. Masson, *Napoléon chez lui*. Ernouf, *Maret*. Régnier, *Les préfets*. Saint-Yves, *Évolution du système administratif*. G. Lacour-Gayet, *Talleyrand*, II.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE EMPIRE

"One end only—the prosperity of my Empire." Inventions due to the war with England. The Emperor extols home products. Trade and industry. The Exhibition. The Chambers of Commerce. Sorry plight of trade. Agriculture prospers. Public Works; the network of roads; the Alpine routes; the canals. Paris a vast workshop. Growing popularity of the Emperor. The "Report" of 1806.

**T**HIS great machine, every part of which he had put together and of which he remained "the great motive power," had never in the Emperor's eyes been an end in itself but merely a means, an instrument. And what was the object he wished it to serve? "One end only," he declared, "the prosperity of my Empire." I have already quoted his letter to the Minister of the Interior in which he expressed his regret at being constantly turned away by war from "the first object of his care, the first need of his heart—the sound and solid organisation of everything connected with finance, trade, and manufacture." It is quite clear that he was ahead of his time and far more deeply interested in economics, as we should say to-day, than in politics. For a short time after the Peace of Amiens he had hoped to be able to devote his whole energies to this side of life; but, even when the peace was broken, he had no intention of ceasing to take an interest in it—very far from it! Although the renewal of the war with England had upset all his grand plans in the economic sphere, it was not without its advantages for trade and industry, which it freed from dangerous rivalry and for which, even before the Blockade shut out all British goods, it secured ever greater openings on the Continent. The important point was to replace British imports not only in France herself, but also in the rest of Europe, now bound to the latter by such close ties. The English

Napoleon's  
Aim.

Inventions  
due to War  
with England.

## ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE EMPIRE

had hitherto had almost the sole monopoly of colonial products—sugar, coffee, and vegetable dyes; moreover, in addition to the various grades of steel, they also supplied France with cotton goods, cashmere and muslin. During the Revolution the French people had been content to curse Pitt for depriving them of sugar, coffee and cotton goods. But Napoleon, as usual, took the realistic point of view, and his first thought was to enquire of both agriculture and manufacture in France as to how substitutes could be found for English imports. Cane sugar was no longer coming into the country, so sugar must be made out of grapes or beetroot (this idea had occurred to him as early as 1800); there was no coffee—roasted chicory seed would have to take its place; indigo was not to be had; a substitute for it would have to be found in some home-grown plant; cotton goods were non-existent; very well, if the experiment of growing cotton in the south of France failed, people would have to wear good woollen clothes; and if, in spite of the expostulations of the Master, fashionable folk refused to dress all the year round in Lyons silks and Elbeuf cloth, the factories of Saint Quentin would be called upon to produce fine linen, and there would be French reproductions of Indian cottons and even of cashmere.

He became personally the great advocate of French goods, and as early as 1800 forbade those in his immediate circle to make use of English stuffs, forcing them to wear French  
**Napoleon Extols Home Products.** linens, silks and velvets. He even went so far as to tear up dresses belonging to Josephine and Hortense if they were made of English muslin.

In fact, the Emperor was determined to use every possible means in his power to protect French industry—the word being used in its widest sense.

No industry received greater encouragement than the silk and velvet manufactures of Lyons, which were once more revived.

**Trade and Industry.** In 1800 there were 3,500 looms; eight years later 10,720 were running. Jacquard, a protégé of Chaptal, the Minister of the Interior, had placed a new machine in the hands of his fellow-countrymen which enabled them to meet the Emperor's wishes. Wool and cotton mills sprang up right and left; in Mulhouse, Mieg and Dollfus introduced improved methods of production; at Roubaix a new

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wool-weaving industry sprang up ; at Jouy, on the outskirts of Paris, Oberkampf opened a factory for machine-printed fabrics, while at Auteuil, Ternaux manufactured imitation Indian cashmere. Pages and pages could be written about this prodigious movement for the output of new goods. They would be beyond the scope of the present work, however. But it is a task that should be undertaken, for Napoleon himself placed these economic victories to the credit of the nation, as it were, with quite as much pride and pleasure as he showed in proclaiming its military successes. On the 27th of June, 1806, he went to Jouy in person to pin his own cross on Oberkampf's breast, and he acted in a similar way when Delessert handed him the first lump of beet sugar made at Passy. If a crisis arose, as it did in 1806, which threatened to lead to a stoppage of work, he insisted on large advances being made to the industrialists by the Treasury. "My aim," he declared, "is not to prevent certain merchants from going bankrupt ; the national resources could not possibly run to that ; but to prevent such and such a factory from closing down. . . . The accounts you present to me " (he was addressing the Minister of the Interior) "should be reduced to the following formula : 'I have lent such and such a sum to this factory, which employs such and such a number of hands, because it was threatened with loss of work.' "

Consequently he felt greatly cheered when the new Exhibition was opened at the Louvre in the autumn of 1806. One fair visitor left it full of wonder at "this gathering of our best manufacturers . . . true benefactors of the human race, since they put bread into the mouths of so many people." This was also the Emperor's attitude, and he wished the *Moniteur* to publish the fact that there were ten times as many exhibitors as there had been at the Exhibition of the year X. The announcement of the victory of Jena was to be inserted side by side with that of victory in this other sphere. Napoleon created Chambers of Commerce and the General Council of Agriculture, Commerce and Arts and Crafts, and probably if he had not been constantly "diverted," as he called it, from these matters by outside complications, he would have succeeded in securing that "solid organisation" of which he was able only to lay an isolated stone here and there.

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Protected, encouraged and rewarded, the industrialists at the end of 1806 were in an even more enviable position owing to the increase of business following upon the crisis.

The commercial world had less reason to be pleased. As a matter of fact, the Emperor, as we know, felt less sympathy for Commerce. this branch of the economic life of the nation than he did for industry and agriculture. "I mistrust the speculative spirit of those engaged in commerce," he observed to Mollien. But their complaints worried him, for obviously the war with England was of no advantage to them and merely increased their difficulties. It protected the French manufacturer from competition and this led to a rise in prices, with the result that the middle-man, caught between the demands of the producer and the protests of the consumer, did not dare to ask too much for his goods, and considered he had a grievance. On the 7th of December, 1805, a written protest was sent to Talleyrand in Paris, declaring that "commerce was at an end and that, as far as trade was concerned, Paris would soon be no better than some small town in the United States." On his return the Emperor had asked for full details of this unfortunate state of affairs, but for the time being even his genius was unable to discover a remedy; all he could do was to hold out to the Chambers of Commerce the hope that he would soon be in a position to impose upon England a peace that would set everything right.

He felt no such anxiety with regard to agriculture. According to Chaptal, he placed it "in the front rank among the utilitarian arts." He loved it as a realist in sympathy with Agriculture. those other realists consisting of the French peasantry. Like La Fontaine, he knew that in France "the land is the last to fail you," but by "land" he meant the peasant quite as much as the actual soil of France. He knew that the corn, in which from the first to the last day of his reign he never ceased to take the deepest interest, was provided for him by the peasant. But corn meant bread, and in the towns of France the temper of the people was good or bad according to whether bread was cheap or dear.

Moreover, it was on agriculture that he relied for the production of the raw materials which the war with England made it necessary for France to find for herself, and he was particularly anxious for



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the sheep-rearing industry to be developed in order to secure wool for manufacture. Every encouragement was given with this object in view, though, as a matter of fact, the peasant did not require much urging. After the enfranchisement of the land, the latter had obtained possession of it, and, freed from anxiety by the stabilisation of the national property, had returned to his humble and arduous labour and was finding it extremely profitable. The agricultural industry had increased fivefold, with the result that in the rural districts a state of prosperity existed which everybody agreed was unprecedented. In addition to all this, the Emperor helped agriculture as well as every form of economic activity by putting the roads all over the country into good repair—a most important part of the gigantic task of setting the Public Works Department once more on its feet under the Empire.

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"I have made the glory of my reign consist in changing the whole face of the country," wrote the Emperor to his Minister of the Interior in 1810. His was the pride of the ruler; every *Imperator* has indulged in the dream of Augustus "to leave a city of marble where he had found a city of brick," and to intersect with roads a country

Public  
Works.

handed over to him in a state of decay—a very natural ambition, too, on the part of the man who establishes law and order. The monuments proclaimed the glory and the roads assured the orderly administration of the country.

I have already described the lamentable condition in which Bonaparte found the roads, canals and harbours. In this connection we have only to hear what Levasseur, a historian of economics, who had no love for the imperial government, has to say: "Thirty-three thousand five hundred miles of roads either made or repaired, eighteen rivers rendered navigable, mountains crossed, bridges built, canals dug, and Paris embellished constituted merely a prelude to all the Emperor had in mind."

Whole pages would be required to give even a faint idea of the great works carried out between 1804 and 1813. As early as 1806 everything was in progress and part of the work already finished. The great Alpine highways

The Roads.

to Geneva, Cenis, Simplon and Corniche were being constructed

## ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE EMPIRE

and would alone have made the glory of one man's reign. But these were merely the more famous roads ; it was the repair of vast stretches of road, spreading all over the country, that really counted. The Prefects were all eager to outdo each other. Jean Bon Saint-André, Prefect of Mont Tonnerre, did not hesitate to swallow up millions of money destined for other purposes in the construction of the magnificent road which runs along the Rhine from Coblenz to Strasbourg. The Emperor, who had a horror of any kind of disorder in financial matters, scolded him ; but when he saw the road he smiled. " Monsieur Jean Bon evidently wanted to make his own little Simplon," he observed. And he would have liked all his Prefects to " construct their miniature Simplons." As a matter of fact, with the spread of the Empire, we shall find nearly all of them, from Hamburg to Rome, making the attempt. Napoleon gave them instructions

**The Canals.** to do so, and did not forget the canals, which also increased in number. In his interest in the work the Emperor was driven almost to exasperation by the length of time—on the whole very moderate—which it took. " It will take twenty years to finish that canal," he wrote sadly. " What will happen meanwhile ? Wars will break out, foolish and ignorant people will get into power, and the canals will never be finished." For he no longer trusted anybody but himself to complete the edifice of the new France. There were also marshes to be drained and harbours to be dredged, and he had all this work put in hand. A newspaper of July, 1806, gives a list of the work already completed within the space of four short years, and declared that it would have amply filled a reign of twenty. And while under his magic wand a whole new city, Napoléon-Vendée, sprang complete out of the ground, he also rebuilt Lyons, which had been destroyed by a decree of the Convention, and planned a complete reconstruction of Paris.

As early as 1806 all the work to be done in that city had been put in hand. Whole quays had been constructed, the present Rue de Rivoli, Rue de Castiglione and Rue de la Paix were being built, and the Louvre was nearing completion, thus enabling the Great Man to have the letter N surrounded by a wreath of laurel engraved by the side of the initials of Francis I and Louis XIV. On the new Quai d'Orsay the foundations had been laid of the

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

palace destined to house the *Cour des Comptes* and the Council of State. In the heart of Paris the Bourse was being built, a gigantic Parthenon, waiting for the *Temple de la Victoire*, now the church of *La Madeleine*, and the *Arc de l'Étoile*, to resuscitate

the classic style of architecture as well as the glorious memories of the Empire. As early as 1806 Paris was delivered over to the hands of the

great architects—Brongniart, Vignon, Percier, Fontaine, and a score of others. The Emperor, when he was away from the capital, was in a constant state of anxiety. "How far have they got with the Bourse? How far have they got with the Wine Market? How far have they got with the Arc de Triomphe?" And when he was actually in Paris he used constantly to ride round visiting the work while it was in progress. By the end of 1806 everything was already beginning to get into shape, and on the 3rd of September the *Gazette de France* announced that the foundations of the *Arc de l'Étoile* had been completed, adding, "In the old days people would have said, 'That was built by the Romans.' But future generations will say, 'That was built by Napoleon!'"

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Tant d'heur et tant de gloire  
Ne peuvent pas si tôt<sup>1</sup> . . .

as Corneille would have said. And public opinion, which when the Empire was first founded had been so hesitant, now suddenly rallied whole-heartedly round the conqueror. When he returned to Paris he was, according to the report of an eye-witness usually far from prejudiced in his favour, welcomed with "delirious joy." And when he appeared at the Théâtre Français, where *Athalie* was being played, the whole of the audience turned towards the imperial box and greeted with thunderous applause the famous line :

Was ever a day so rich in miracles ?

And when Talma, who was taking the part of Abner, stepped

<sup>1</sup>Such greatness and such glory cannot so soon. . . .

## ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE EMPIRE

forward and announced, "The French Army has entered Naples!" there was a further demonstration of enthusiasm.

The 2nd of May, on which the Legislative Body was opened, was a day of triumph. The troops which escorted the Emperor from the Tuileries to the Palais Bourbon had been borrowed from

the regiments that had fought at Austerlitz. The "Report" of 1806. Once again "frenzied" cheers greeted the Emperor and his soldiers. The *Report concerning the condition of the Empire in 1806* still arouses the

admiration of those who read it to-day. What, then, can it have meant to the public who applauded it on the day it was published! The crushing victories of Ulm and Austerlitz, the Treaty of Pressburg, the dictation of the terms of peace, and the acquisition of territory fill but a few of its pages. It was the realisation of the plans for internal reconstruction, the successful launching of the scheme for public education, the completion of a second Code, the balancing of the budget in spite of the huge sums devoted to important public works, the proud display of conquests in the realm of industry, the tripling of the yield from agriculture, and civil peace firmly established on the support given by the country to the imperial Government that the Emperor regarded as the most triumphant achievements of his rule. Here and there a phrase stands out conspicuous as bearing the imprint of the Great Man: "Our armies ended their career of conquest only when I ordered them to cease fire." And, with reference to the works at Lyons: "The Rhône will be confined within its banks and brought nearer to the town which it seems anxious to desert." And, lastly, the following declaration: "It is not conquests that the Emperor has in mind; he has exhausted the sphere of military glory. . . . To perfect the administration and make it the source of lasting happiness and ever-increasing prosperity for his people, and by its deeds, an example of pure and lofty morality. . . . such is the glory at which he aims."

SOURCES. Works already mentioned by Aulard (II) and Bailleu (II). *Correspondance de Napoléon*, VIII, IX, X, XI. Chaptal, *Souvenirs*. Thibaudeau, *Mémoires*.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Lanzac de Laborie (VI), Levasseur, Dejean, and Marion. Fréd. Barbey, *Le Simplon*. Lévy-Schneider, *Jean Bon Saint-André*.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE GRAND EMPIRE

The Emperor and Europe in 1806. Prussia the victim of her own duplicity. Fox at the Foreign Office. Yarmouth in Paris. Cattaro delivered by the Austrians into the hands of the Russians. The Grand Empire is founded. "The federative Empire." Its principles; the policy of "Marches"; the *Rights of Man*; the Roman Empire; the United States of Europe. Mistaken policy towards the Bonaparte family. Joseph in Naples, Louis in Holland and Murat in Germany. The Confederation of the Rhine; the initiative comes from the Germans; the Emperor-Protector. The Napoleonic West.

**N**OTHING could have inspired Napoleon with greater confidence in the face of Europe, or made him more determined not to tolerate the slightest want of respect towards the "Grand Nation" from any quarter whatsoever, than the knowledge that he had *his* people behind him.

He had returned from Vienna with two treaties in his pocket.

The  
Emperor  
and Europe  
in 1806.

The Treaty of Pressburg put Austria out of court for some time, while the Treaty of Schönbrunn connected Prussia closely with the policy of France. He meant to keep a sharp look-out to see that the terms of these treaties were fulfilled, for,

as Russia and Great Britain were still at war with France, he very rightly suspected that Vienna had not lost all hope of taking her revenge, or Berlin of wriggling out of the contract, and that both were turning anxious eyes in the direction of St. Petersburg.

With regard to Austria, Napoleon had taken his own precautions and, in accordance with the terms of the treaty, would continue to occupy Braunau, the real gate of Vienna, as long as Cattaro was not handed over to him. Thus he had her by the throat. But Prussia did not feel herself

under any such constraint. At the news of the Treaty of Schönbrunn made by Haugwitz with Napoleon under the severest pressure, the indignation in the

## THE GRAND EMPIRE

Court of Berlin had almost reached the point of revolt. The King made up his mind to have the treaty altered, but while Haugwitz was on his way to Paris, charged with the task of submitting these amendments, the Duke of Brunswick set out for St. Petersburg armed with every assurance of friendship. "Those Prussians are mad!" exclaimed Napoleon to Talleyrand, on receiving due warning of this from his representative in Berlin.

He regarded them as all the "madder" because a ray of light had appeared from the direction of England. Pitt had just died on the 23rd of January. Trafalgar had filled him with exultation and pride, but immediately afterwards Austerlitz had broken his heart. In fact, it

**Death of  
Pitt.**

came as a terrible blow to the whole of England. The war was beginning to make her suffer pretty severely in the economic sphere, and a reaction had set in which Fox exploited, as soon as his

**Fox at the  
Foreign  
Office.**

great adversary was dead, in order to have himself appointed Foreign Minister. Now, Fox, in terms with which we are familiar, had condemned the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, and his accession to office held out some hope of peace, with the result that Napoleon had never been less inclined to give way to Prussia's "madness."

Furthermore, the German Princes were displaying ever greater subservience towards Napoleon. And he made up his mind to turn it to account in order to form the rulers of the right bank of the Rhine into a confederation bound by close ties to France. He was still hesitating, but the weakness of the Princes unfortunately concealed from him the real feelings of their subjects, and inspired in him a bottomless contempt for the German character. And Prussia was to be called upon to pay the price.

Haugwitz could not have hit upon a more unpropitious moment. The hope of opening negotiations with England and the feeling that he was in a position to remould Germany almost made Napoleon regret that, by the Treaty of Schönbrunn, he had handed over Hanover to Prussia. The King of England would doubtless demand its return. And lo and behold! after having been given the chance of securing this tasty morsel, the "lunatics" in Berlin refused to accept the Treaty unless it was amended. They wished to have it revised! Very well, it should be revised,

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

but at their expense. The Emperor therefore gave the Prussian Minister a somewhat cold reception. Since Prussia was repudiating the Treaty, he was in a position to increase his demands. And he refused to allow Prussia to take possession of Hanover unless she broke off relations with England by closing the mouths of all her rivers to British ships. The King of Prussia was forthwith to accept the Treaty of Schönbrunn thus amended, as far as he was concerned, for the worse, on pain of immediate war.

Frederick William's Duplicity. Haugwitz, terrified out of his wits, signed it on the 15th of February, and the pusillanimous Frederick William, touched in his weakest spot, ratified everything—offensive and defensive alliance with

France, rupture with England and even with Russia. But unable to break himself of playing a double game, which had always been characteristic of his policy, he wrote the same day to the Tsar protesting eternal devotion. On the 4th of March he took possession of Hanover and shut all its ports against the English.

Such events as these were likely to force England to open negotiations with France. And as early as the 20th of February Fox acted in a manner which revealed a desire to enter into relations with her once more. He had been approached by a miserable wretch who, imagining he was still living in Pitt's day, offered to assassinate Napoleon in return for a sum of money, and the English Minister had not only refused but had warned Talleyrand. In thanking him the latter had seized the opportunity to inform London of the Emperor's desire to open negotiations for peace. The latter was awaiting England's overtures in a conciliatory spirit.

For the time being Europe was in a state of utter confusion. After Austerlitz even the Tsar's conceit had been rudely shaken,

Europe in Utter Confusion. and it had required the entreaties of the old Russian party, ever rabid against France, to fortify him once more. But St. Petersburg still remained puzzled when Brunswick, in the name of Frederick

William, arrived there and once more going beyond his instructions, raised hopes of an alliance with the King of Prussia. Alexander was delighted. And he demanded and obtained from the King of Prussia a secret declaration (Frederick William's cabinet was stacked with these secret undertakings) in which he

## THE GRAND EMPIRE

assured the Tsar that "his treaty of alliance with France would never lead him to break off his natural alliance with Russia." The Prussian Court is both "false and stupid," exclaimed Napoleon with his usual clarity of vision ; although, at the moment, he was still in ignorance of these underhand proceedings, his instinct warned him of what was going on. Seeing he had left his troops in Germany he had no intention of being taken by surprise ; the excuse he gave for so doing was that Cattaro had not yet been handed over to him by Austria. As a matter of fact, he also wished to be on his guard against some new "folly" on the part of Berlin. The future was to prove him doubly right.

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He was all the more determined to squeeze his adversaries, seeing that the hope of opening negotiations with London had become decidedly brighter. Just at this moment he was in a very favourable position as far as England was concerned. He had given up all idea of founding a colonial Empire in America, but the dream of a Mediterranean Empire, which he had cherished for some time, loomed all the more prominent in his mind. As Russia, England and Austria were contemplating a partition of the East, he too looked forward to having a share in the spoils in the more or less immediate future. And when, as the result of a partition, Egypt and Syria again fell into the hands of France, what need was there to worry about colonies further afield ? It was this consideration which made him less stubborn on the question of Malta, which he was now disposed to allow England to keep, provided he could hope to be himself installed in Damascus and Alexandria. Hanover could be returned to the English Crown, and Prussia be given its equivalent in territory in some other part of Germany. He sincerely regarded the Treaty of Pressburg as closing the chapter of his conquests in Europe itself, and was, therefore, perfectly ready to undertake not to make any fresh acquisitions in that sphere. And these were the ideas expressed by Talleyrand in his letters to Fox, who recorded them with the deepest satisfaction.

Fox was sincerely anxious for peace, though his attitude was that of an English Minister fully determined to conclude it only



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on conditions that were honourable, not to say lucrative, for his country. But his colleagues in the Cabinet, and more particularly Lord Grenville, were apparently not so ready to bring the war to a close. At all events, a thousand and one difficulties were raised in London. In any case England insisted on Russia forming a third party to the negotiations. Napoleon agreed to this, but while waiting for Russia to come round to this point of view, could not negotiations at least be opened, even if no actual treaty could be signed? Lord Yarmouth, one of the Englishmen who had been interned in France after the rupture of 1803, offered to act as intermediary. He set out for London, found Fox ready to agree, and at his request went back to Paris entrusted with the task of opening preliminary negotiations.

**Fox Desires  
Peace.**

**Yarmouth  
in Paris.**

Napoleon was all the more delighted at this, seeing that every day brought him fresh proofs of the duplicity of Prussia and perhaps also of Austria. For, like Prussia, Austria seemed intent on breaking her plighted word. Cattaro, which she was to have handed over to France, was suddenly thrown open by Ghislieri, the Austrian officer in command there, to the Russian Admiral, Saniavine, who was cruising in the Adriatic at the time. He occupied the port on which Napoleon had based such high hopes, as a gateway into the Balkan peninsula. The Austrian Chancellery loudly and quite sincerely protested that it had not been in any way responsible for the incident. But Napoleon, justified in not altogether believing these explanations, insisted on Austria demanding from St. Petersburg the evacuation of Cattaro, which she proceeded to do in supplicating rather than in threatening terms. The Tsar was embarrassed; obviously Saniavine had benefited by an act of treachery on the part of the Austrian officer, and Russia had a bad case. Moreover, rumours of negotiations between London and Paris were everywhere rife. For a moment, Alexander was seized with anxiety. The idea of re-opening relations with Paris was not altogether displeasing to him. And he sent Count Oubril there ostensibly for the purpose of discussing the knotty problem of Cattaro. Napoleon was apparently quite satisfied with this, and made up his mind to seize

**Cattaro  
Delivered  
over to the  
Russians.**

## THE GRAND EMPIRE

the opportunity in order to broaden the basis of the negotiations. At the beginning of May he had the impression, which was partially justified, that Europe was ready to lay down her arms (being weary of war, so he gathered) and that there was now no serious obstacle in the way of the great plan towards the realisation of which everything was then converging—the organisation of the Grand Empire.

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We have now reached one of the most critical moments in the history of the Empire, and are on the threshold of events destined strangely to alter the nature of the *régime*, and we must pause to deal with them.

"I am certain that one fine day the world will see the revival of the Western Empire, because the wearied peoples will hasten to place upon their necks the yoke of the best governed nation." It was Napoleon who made this weighty declaration in the Council of State in 1805. That Assembly was accustomed to grandiloquent outbursts. But this was not a mere outburst. On the 12th of January, 1806, the Emperor, who was making preparations for the marriage of his stepson Eugene to the daughter of the King of Bavaria, had addressed to the Senate a message in which, in connection with the young Viceroy of Italy, he clearly defined the relations "which should exist between all the federated States of the French Empire." It was through this sentence

**The  
Grand  
Empire  
Founded.** that the Senate learnt that the Empire was to be a federal Empire. On the 31st of January, in disposing of the Kingdom of Naples, the sovereignty of which he delegated to his brother Joseph, the Emperor wrote to the latter as follows: "The Kingdom of Naples, as well as those of Italy, Switzerland and Holland, and the three German Kingdoms, are to be my federated States." On the 14th of March, Napoleon announced that he had made Holland a kingdom destined for his brother Louis. He had already installed Élise at the head of the principality of Lucca, to which Piombino had been added, and presently gave Guastalla in full right and sovereignty to Pauline, "pretty Pauline," "the queen of fripperies." The Murat household was also holding out its hands, and before long the newly created Grand Duchy of

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Berg and Cleves was to fall into them. Meanwhile, ten German Princes were formed into a Confederation, of which the Emperor of the French was to be the Protector, just as he was already the *Mediator* of the Helvetic Confederation, and henceforward these two titles were to be added to that of Emperor and King of Italy. In fact, the "federated" French Empire now extended as far as the Elbe, the Adriatic and the Straits of Messina; and everything west of a line drawn from the Zuider Zee to Dalmatia was inevitably included in it. It was the Western Empire. In the spring of 1806 the Grand Empire had been completed.

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Its creation was almost inevitable, and had been so long before the rise of Bonaparte, when the Revolution had contemplated and for a time actually put into practice a system of enfeoffed Republics, with the object of forming a barrier, beyond the natural boundaries of France, against possible retaliation on the part of Europe. Bonaparte had had this policy handed down to him and had adopted it as his own, though, as usual with everything he did, he had made it twice as strong and consistent as it had been before. Moreover, he had also inherited another idea which had preceded the doctrine of the *Marches*, and that was the belief in propaganda. As soon as the *Rights of Man* had

The  
Marches.

been voted, Paris had contemplated circulating them far and wide, and in time imposing them upon the whole world. And Bonaparte, though far from being an "ideologue," was nevertheless in some respects a devotee of eighteenth-century philosophy. In spite of his sound common sense, he too, like Condorcet, the geometrician and visionary, believed "that a good law should be good for all men, just as an axiom of Euclid is true for all."

To these two ideas inherited from the Revolution he presently added a third. Like all his contemporaries he admired the Romans, "to whom," he declared, "we must return in everything we do." In Montesquieu he had studied the progress of their policy and the constitution of their Empire. And, in his eyes, the Romans, by their example, justified the principles he had derived from philosophy. Inasmuch as they had placed unrivalled military virtue at the service of a civilisation which, after the

## THE GRAND EMPIRE

spread of Greek culture, had gained the upper hand, and also at the service of a masterful code of law and a disciplined order of society, they had not only conquered, but had also penetrated the world which, in the second century of our era, belonged to the Romans, and was, moreover, actually Roman. This, at least, was what Napoleon believed or wished to believe. And this was undoubtedly the aim which, with the help of the new code of law already in the making, and an admirable administration, he intended to realise. The world once penetrated by the new culture would not only be conquered, but also gradually adapted to it.

As a matter of fact, the Emperor did not expect the whole of Europe to live under the direct rule of one master ; all he hoped was that she would be the first to group her various peoples under the hegemony of the Grand Nation which had proclaimed the Grand Idea and made it triumph ; and the time came when he

<p>The United States of Europe.</p>	<p>even envisaged the possibility of the United States of Europe. But meanwhile, with the object of attracting all the nations to the new system, he would establish all round imperial France a series of States which, though they did not directly belong to him, would be under his guidance and influence, and would constitute model States which the rest would aspire to resemble.</p>
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But he himself was to remain the Emperor of the French, and it was at this point that the system became complicated. These States were not to be in a position ever to turn against the France he intended to create ; they were to be States for ever bound to the policy and strictly subservient to the interests of France. Hence the idea that their thrones were to be occupied by Frenchmen, and Frenchmen, moreover, bound by particularly strong ties to the head of the Empire and his fortunes which, in all sincerity, he identified with those of the country. In 1806 Napoleon imagined

<p>Napoleon's Mistaken Policy towards His Family.</p>	<p>he had found the men he required in his own family, and this was, perhaps, the greatest mistake he could possibly have made.</p>
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<p>Napoleon's Mistaken Policy towards His Family.</p>	<p>We have already discussed his family. True, each member of it had his own peculiar personality, but they also had the common characteristic of never acknowledging, and always refusing to acknowledge that</p>
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## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

they owed the whole of their good fortune to their illustrious brother, and that consequently they must rise or fall with him. Regarding it as perfectly natural to be given thrones, they never believed that they depended upon the will of the man who had bestowed them, and the moment the latter made up his mind to make them bow to it, he was certain to be met on the part of these wild Corsicans by a revolt of which no other Frenchman would have dared to be guilty.

Contrary to the accusation that has so frequently been brought against him, Napoleon did not create thrones for his family. Inspired by the three ideas I have just mentioned—the desire to establish strong Marches to protect the Empire, the hope of impregnating Europe with modern principles and the dream of reviving the imperial policy of ancient Rome—he was very far from harbouring the narrow and brutal conception of a Europe delivered up into the hands of an ambitious family. He intended to keep his royal brothers on a very tight rein; they were merely to rule “their subjects” in the capacity of the highest representatives of France. But Napoleon’s mistake in regard to these strange Sovereigns was magnified by an even more fatal error. Even if these countries had unreservedly admired the modern system created by France and had wished to become part of it, it would yet have become odious in their eyes through the very fact that a stranger was entrusted with the task of imposing it upon them; I would go even further, and say that this stranger would be doubly suspected of being hand in glove with the Master if he happened to belong to the latter’s own flesh and blood. And, oddly enough, the logical result was that this circumstance, quite apart from the tiresome and mistrustful nature of these Bonapartes, led them more than any other of the Emperor’s superior agents, to separate themselves, as soon as they had mounted their thrones, from the man who had made them his crowned delegates. In order to differentiate themselves from him, these princes pretended to stand up against their brother “in the interests of their subjects”; but on being rudely called to order by Paris, it was quite enough for them apparently to comply for a moment, for these same subjects immediately to despise and reject them as being merely the factotums of a foreign monarch.

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The Emperor did not have long to wait before discovering his mistake, or rather becoming aware of the extraordinary pretensions displayed by his brothers in governing "their subjects." Joseph, who had accepted the Crown of the Two Sicilies with the disdainful and almost insulting expression habitual to him, immediately on his arrival in Naples proceeded to regard himself as a "popular" Sovereign and interpreted certain manifestations of "affection" as a sign that he was adored by the *lazzaroni*. The Emperor, a pitiless realist, tried from the very beginning, though in vain, to shatter his illusions.

Louis, entrusted with the task of subjecting the Dutch, who ever since 1793 had been politically allied to France, though they had continued to trade with England, to that economic discipline which was to be strictly enforced all over the Continent, found himself, in the first months of his rule, confronted by such deep-rooted objections that, despairing of ever being able to overcome them, he immediately set himself up as their champion. Lastly Joachim Murat, who had been given the Grand Duchy of Berg and Cleves, and had made a characteristically splendid entry into his capital of Düsseldorf, had but one thought in his head, and that was to round off his territory at the expense of his neighbours, who, unfortunately, happened to be the Prussians.

The latter, since the Emperor had no intention of giving way to the caprices of his brother-in-law, had no reason to pull long faces over this; but the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine depressed them even more. The German Princes, more particularly the Kings of Bavaria and Württemberg and the Grand Duke of Baden, redoubled their efforts to get the French agents to persuade the Emperor to frame a new constitution for Germany. Ever since the Imperial Recess of 1802, the Diet of Ratisbon, under the purely nominal presidency of the Emperor Francis II, had been conducting or had been supposed to be conducting the affairs of the Holy German Empire. As a matter of fact, everything was in the hands of the Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, Count Dalberg, erstwhile Bishop of Mainz, who had become Prince-Archbishop of Ratisbon. He took the step expected by

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Napoleon, and on the 19th of April addressed to him a letter of somewhat laboured obsequiousness, in which he conjured him to become "the regenerator of the Germanic Constitution." In another memorial he pointed out that the Emperor Francis, by allowing the Russians to enter Germany in 1805, had "broken the agreement he had made," and he added the following strange words: "May he (Francis II) be Emperor of the East to resist the Russians, and may the Empire of the West be revived in the person of the Emperor Napoleon, and become what it was under Charlemagne, the union of Italy, France and Germany."

Napoleon, whose wishes were met, and almost surpassed by this document, welcomed the request of the German Arch-Chancellor. He was not anxious to set himself up as the "regenerator" of the Germanic Body, being well aware that some of the German Princes would be but little inclined to support the idea. But he was in favour of the dissolution of the old Germanic Empire and the formation of a smaller Confederation, closely bound to France, and acting as a bulwark to protect her on the other side of the Rhine. If Prussia, who on paper was an ally of France, displayed any jealousy, it would be suggested that she should group under her hegemony eight or ten of the German States excluded from the new Confederation, which, in order to make its nature perfectly clear, would be called the Confederation of the Rhine. Napoleon would be appointed its Protector, which would authorise him, in case of war, to demand its support with men and money, and also to superintend from above the Government of these German states, now to be so closely bound up with the famous federal system.

Talleyrand was entrusted with the task of making all the necessary arrangements and the result of his labours was the Constitution of the 12th of July, 1806. Sixteen Princes joined the Confederation, among them being the rulers of Bavaria,

Württemberg, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt and Berg.

The  
Confederation  
of the  
Rhine.

The capital of the Confederation was to be Frankfurt. Its members were to be the allies in perpetuity of France, and were to supply her with a contingent of 65,000 men. At their head there was to be a Prince-Primate, who would also be Grand Duke of Frankfurt; Dalberg was appointed to the post by way of reward

## THE GRAND EMPIRE

for his ready compliance. The Emperor-Protector was to appoint the successor of this first Prince-Primate, and he was also to have the right of choosing any new members subsequently admitted into the Confederation.

**The  
Emperor-  
Protector.**

On the 1st of August, the Constitution having been ratified by the sixteen princes, the latter recalled their representatives from the Diet of Ratisbon. This meant the end of the Holy Empire. The new Prince-Primate had the doors of the hall in which the Assembly had held its sessions for three hundred years closed, after having had the throne on which Charles V had sat unceremoniously removed from it. Francis II apparently resigned himself to this sad termination of his rule. But, as a matter of fact, the German Empire had been no more than a name ever since 1802, and two years had already passed since the eagle had been removed from the Hofburg in Vienna and set on the pinnacle of the Tuileries.

This event extended the federated Empire as far as the Elbe. As early as the 28th of March, the German, von Gentz, one of Napoleon's worst enemies, had written a furious letter to Jackson, the English agent, in which he said: "I foresee quite clearly that in two years' time Bonaparte . . . will be the recognised master, just as to-day he is the actual master of the whole of Europe between the Adriatic and the Vistula."

**The  
Napoleonic  
West.**

And he was right, though it took less than a year for his prophecy to be fulfilled.

**SOURCES.** Works already mentioned by Bailieu (II). *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XI, XII, XIII. Murat, *Lettres*, V. De Maistre (Joseph), *Correspondance*. Letters of Joseph, King of Naples, published by J. Rambaud. *Memoirs or Reminiscences* by Molé, Meneval (I), and Madame de Rémusat. Canova, *Entretiens avec Napoléon*.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel (VI and VII), Driault (II), Masson (*Famille*, III, IV) and A. Lévy (*Napoléon et la Paix*). Comte d'Haussonville, *L'Eglise Romaine et le Premier Empire*. L. Madelin, *La Rome de Napoléon*. Masson, *Jadis*, II. Ducasse, *Les rois frères de Napoléon*. J. Rambaud, *Naples sous Joseph Bonaparte*. A. Rambaud, *La domination française en Allemagne*, II. Driault, *Napoléon et l'Italie*.



# CHAPTER XXI

## THE CONSEQUENCES

### CONFLICT WITH ROME AND BERLIN

Italy an essential part of the Grand Empire. Rome menaced. Conflict with the Pope. The "successor of Charlemagne." Character of Pius VII; the Emperor's mistaken view of the Pope and the Clergy. Incidents resulting therefrom. The Emperor irritated with Rome. Prussia alarmed. English and Russian negotiations in Paris. Death of Fox. England shuns the issue. Hitherto Napoleon has favoured Prussia. The latter regards the Confederation of the Rhine as a menace. She arms herself and forms an alliance with the Tsar. The Prussian ultimatum. The Prussians invade Saxony. Berlin furious. Europe ready to take up arms. Napoleon certain of victory.

THE foundation of the Grand Empire did not escape the menace of opposition on the part of Prussia, who was alarmed by the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine; but, for the time being, one of the consequences it provoked—equally grave in another sense—was the budding conflict with Rome, which was due both to the establishment of this Grand Empire in Italy and to the pretensions of Napoleon, now openly proclaimed to be the successor of Charlemagne and the Emperor of the West, though without the actual title.

"All Italy shall be subject to my law," he had written to Pius VII, it will be remembered, on the 13th of February, 1806. And,

after France, there was no country in which this descendant of the Buonaparti of Tuscany felt a deeper interest. In 1796 he had found her shattered, parcelled out and divided between various princes, some of whom were foreigners, and long since reduced to nothing more than a "geographical expression." And he had revived the hope that she might once again become a free and united country.

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But apparently Napoleon did not consider that the time was yet ripe for the reconstruction of a free and united Italy. One day, perhaps, though it was still far distant, he would make the peninsula, which had gradually become unified, into a kingdom "for one of his sons." But for the moment Italy appealed to him more as a marvellous base in the middle of the Mediterranean, "which is the chief and constant goal of my policy," he wrote to Joseph on the eve of the latter's departure for Naples. In any case he had made up his mind that Italy should be his alone. "She is a mistress whose favours I refuse to share with anybody else," he observed to Lucchesini. "The Pope shall be my vassal and I shall conquer Sicily."

"The Pope shall be my vassal!" Such was the ineluctable consequence of the system! Right in the centre of Italy, now subjected to his law, from Venice to the Straits of Messina and from Turin to Otranto, cutting the peninsula in half and hampering intercourse between the Kingdom of Naples and the Kingdom of Italy, and, moreover, resisting all attempts at being bound to the new Empire, the Papal States constituted the one flaw in the undisputed rule of this Italian-born Cæsar over the land of his fathers. As a separate State, Rome, moreover, was now an anachronism, and in addition to placing difficulties in the way of Napoleon's policy, she also offended all his preconceptions. "This old machine will fall to pieces of its own accord," General Bonaparte had contemptuously informed the Directory. But the First Consul, since he had need of the Pope as a spiritual Sovereign, had brought himself to lay aside for a time the fundamental antipathy which was bound in the end to make him demolish "the old machine." He had preserved it because he hoped to have it at his disposal. Meanwhile, after the imperial crown had been placed on his brow, another more or less conscious feeling had come to the support of his desires. He was, by temperament, a Roman, and now regarded himself as the man who, like Charlemagne before him, had resuscitated the Emperors of the ancient City of the Seven Hills. In this respect he intended to be the successor of Charlemagne, believing, though wrongly, that the Carlovingian had made the sacrifice of independence the price to be paid by the Holy Father for being endowed with the "patrimony" of St.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Peter, which was thenceforward to be subject to the suzerainty of the Emperor. "Your Holiness," wrote Napoleon to Pius VII, "is Sovereign in Rome, but I am Emperor;" and referring to the Romans he told Fesch, "I am their Emperor."

As a matter of fact, he only revived these ancient claims because at the end of 1805 he had suddenly become aware that Rome was showing signs of resistance. The Curia, as we know, had never shared Pius VII's favourable attitude towards France and her new master, and had been up in arms when the Pope had returned empty-handed from Paris whither, contrary to the wishes of the Cardinals, he had ventured to go. And the latter had had no difficulty in persuading the Holy Father that he had been scandalously deceived, and that in allowing himself to be fooled he had betrayed the interests confided to his care.

Pius VII was, first and foremost, a conscience incarnate. Meek and mild by nature, this saintly old man was nevertheless capable of resolute determination the moment conscience spoke. Thus, in 1801 and 1804 he had resisted all the arguments brought to bear by the Sacred College, and Napoleon, as well as the whole of France, had reaped the benefit, because Pius VII felt that the sacred duty of reconciling the new France with the Church had been placed upon his shoulders. But a similar regard for the fulfilment of an ineluctable duty was now destined to make him stubbornly opposed to the Emperor. "Temporal power belongs to the Church," he declared in 1809. "We are but the administrator thereof." This was the definite belief he had held ever since his election and to which he continued to cling; but whereas a Pope who was merely puffed up with pride might perhaps have given way when confronted with violence, this gentle and pious prelate, whose conciliatory spirit was nevertheless fortified by the conviction of a clear duty to be performed, would have died rather than yield.

Thus a conflict was inevitable, and the Emperor engaged in it misled by the most erroneous ideas, not only in connection with the character of the Pope himself, whom he regarded as feeble, but also in connection with "those Italian priests whom we don't know," he observed contemptuously, but whom, as a matter of fact, he did not appreciate. He was destined to find them more or

Conflict  
with the  
Pope.

## THE CONSEQUENCES

less openly opposed to any attack on the power of the Pope, and their hostility became more marked when war was declared on the Papacy. He did not know the French priests much better, and imagined he had them at his beck and call, as a result of the favours he had showered upon them. True, they had had the effect of reconciling the clergy to him for a time, though without in any way inducing them to rally to the support of the system at the head of which he had placed himself, and which they detested because it had been born of the Revolution. The French clergy were even less inclined than they had been under His Most Christian Majesty and "external Bishop," Louis XIV, to support the Emperor even in a partial schism, and the latter was entering on a path beset with pitfalls when he rushed into a conflict with the Head of Christendom.

As a matter of fact, he did not rush into it deliberately. Most imprudently Rome herself provoked him to do so at a moment when the Curia should have done everything possible to show him the necessary consideration. But the latter had induced Pius VII, three months after his return from Paris, to reach the conclusion that in allowing himself to be fooled by the Emperor he had failed in his duty. He could repair "his error" by again putting forward the demands, more especially those connected with the temporal power, which Napoleon had refused in 1804. The Court of Rome felt that a favourable moment to urge these claims had arrived when Napoleon was engaged in his German campaign in 1805, and on the 13th of November of that year the Pope addressed him a letter full of reproaches. "We owe it to ourselves to demand from Your Majesty the evacuation of Ancona, and if we are met with a refusal, we fail to see how we can reconcile it with the maintenance of friendly relations with Your Majesty's Minister."

This demand, accompanied by a thinly veiled threat, would, in any case, have been deemed inadmissible by Napoleon. But the date at which it was put forward exasperated him. Rome had waited until he was at grips with Austria and on the eve of a difficult battle in order to change her tone in the hope of intimidating him. "Those fools imagine I am dead," he wrote to Fesch after Austerlitz.

He waited to reply until the victory had been won, and his

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

grand "Carlovingian" dream was beginning to take shape, unduly stimulating his arrogance, and above all strengthening his determination to be recognised as "Emperor of Rome." The Pope saw that he had been led to perpetrate a blunder, and would no doubt have resigned himself not to repeat his requests, had not Napoleon, taking his stand on this "impertinent" demand, even at that early date put forward his claim to be regarded as the suzerain of Rome, which appeared to the Pope not only unjustifiable, as it certainly was, but also monstrous. This opened the conflict which was destined to be embittered in every possible way.

Pius VII, whose animosity increased every day, refused to recognise Joseph as King of Naples, the Crown of which, declared the Curia, had never been bestowed on any Sovereign except on the authority of Rome. It was now the Emperor's turn to be confronted with what he considered a monstrous claim. His answer was to lay greater emphasis than ever on the "rights" which his imperial title gave him over Rome. "Your Holiness is the Sovereign of Rome, but I am her Emperor," he declared. Pius VII was at once up in arms. "There is no Emperor of Rome," he replied. "Neither can there be, unless the sovereign pontiff is despoiled of the sovereign authority he wields in Rome." With the putting into writing of these weighty words on either side the fatal dispute came to a head.

It must be acknowledged that the Court of Rome embittered it by resorting to somewhat petty tactics. The Emperor asked it to annul the marriage of Jerome with Eliza Paterson, a favour which the Pope would certainly have granted a year previously, and his refusal in 1806 appeared to the Emperor as gratuitously vexatious. When the Civil Code was introduced into the Kingdom of Italy,

**The Pope's  
Obstructive  
Policy.**

the Pope opposed it because it countenanced divorce. When Venetia was united with the Kingdom of Italy, the Pope refused to extend the benefits of the Italian Concordat to this new province. When fiefs were created in Italy for the Emperor's sisters, the Pope refused to recognise any ecclesiastical changes made in these principalities. In the end the Emperor lost his temper, but the object of his wrath was always the "Court of Rome," which, for the time being, he pretended to regard as distinct from the

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Pope. Meanwhile, Pius VII had refused to shut his ports to the English—"the infidels!"—"He has countenanced the intrigues of Greek and Anglican princes!" exclaimed the Emperor. How scandalous—nay, how mad! But in his heart of hearts, since his plans with regard to Italy were now maturing, he was seeking pretexts for the complete subjection of the Pope to his rule. "As a temporal prince," he wrote to Talleyrand, "the Pope is a member of my confederation, whether he wishes it or not." And if the Holy Father refused to be bound, the Emperor informed the Legate Caprara to the latter's consternation, he would set up a Senate in Rome, and when once Rome and the Papal States were in his hands, he would never evacuate them. Thus, in July, 1806, he was already contemplating the annexation of the Papal States. From all this certain servants of the Empire augured no good. Europe, keenly alive to all the difficulties with which the Emperor might be confronted, picked up courage once more. In dealing a blow or even by merely uttering threats against the Holy See, would not Napoleon give to the new European coalition the complexion of a Holy League with which in 1792 Pius VI's letters to the rulers of Europe had endowed the first?

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At the very moment when this coalition was on the point of being reinforced by the adhesion of Prussia, the Emperor, as a matter of fact, imagined that, on the contrary, it was about to collapse owing to the conclusion of peace with both England and Russia.

Lord Yarmouth was still carrying on his negotiations with Talleyrand, and the Emperor did his utmost to help matters on. We already know his reason for being prepared now to give way on the question of Malta as well as with regard to the colonies. As for Hanover, he was all the more inclined to hand it back to England, seeing that he was becoming every day more irritated by the attitude of Prussia. In any case the latter would be given fair compensation.

The English emissary informed London of Napoleon's conciliatory attitude. But the British Government, whether sincerely or not, had no intention of precipitating itself into the Emperor's arms; at all events, it took refuge in its pledges to

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Russia. This objection, however, was removed when, on the 6th of July, Count Oubril arrived in Paris charged by the Tsar with the mission of settling the matter of Cattaro. Talleyrand literally took possession of him and, before a fortnight had passed, persuaded him to sign, on the 20th of July, a treaty for which the Emperor had hardly dared to hope. Was the Russian envoy sincere? It may well be doubted. Nevertheless, Fox now held that he was authorised to push on with the negotiations. Probably he was the only member of the British Cabinet who was

Lord  
Lauderdale  
in Paris.

sincerely resolved to bring them to a successful issue. Be this as it may, he sent Lord Lauderdale to Paris as plenipotentiary. As a matter of fact, it was an unfortunate choice, perhaps purposely so.

Almost as abrupt in manner as Lord Whitworth, the noble Lord was the worst possible man to carry on the work of the amiable Lord Yarmouth. As soon as he arrived on the 5th of August, he presented fresh, and far more exorbitant claims. So anxious was the French Government to secure peace, however, that it even seemed disposed to submit to them. But the negotiations had not

Death  
of Fox.

lasted much more than a month when, on the 13th of September, Fox died. "The death of Mr. Fox," wrote Napoleon long afterwards, "was one of the fatalities of my career. If he had lived, peace would have been made." But this is by no means certain; in view of the favourable reception accorded to her proposals, England, even before the disappearance of the Whig statesman, seemed anxious to avoid coming to terms. In any case, Lauderdale prolonged the negotiations, convinced that the Tsar would disavow the treaty made by Oubril, and that before long Prussia would join the coalition.

Prussia, ever since the beginning of the spring, had been in a dangerously feverish condition. She was under a deep debt of

Napoleon's  
Consideration  
for  
Prussia.

gratitude to Napoleon, who had time and again enriched her and added to her territory, and in spite of glaring acts of treachery on her part, had shown her more consideration than he had done to any other power. But it was this very attitude of friendship that the Court of Berlin had in horror. Queen Louisa had formed a party of her own, which openly proclaimed its

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ever more violent detestation of "Bonaparte" and his country. It was supported by the Generals, who, presumptuous almost to the point of insanity, boasted, in spite of Valmy and other reverses, that, since Rosbach, Prussia had never known defeat in the past,

**Prussia's** and would never suffer it in the future. The  
**Truculence.** younger officers followed suit, and out-Heroded

Herod in their conceit. They acclaimed the Queen with martial cheers, when, in her Colonel's uniform, she reviewed her regiment. The poor King—"that fool!" as Napoleon called him—was overwhelmed by his wife, his Generals, and his Ministers. Having long since taken refuge in a policy of subterfuge, he sent Paris and St. Petersburg promises of friendship and even of alliance which contradicted each other, his two Ministers, Haugwitz and Hardenberg, being instructed to fawn on Napoleon and Alexander respectively. On the 30th of June the unfortunate monarch had reached the point of signing and despatching to the Tsar a declaration by the terms of which "the treaty of alliance with France was never in any way to interfere with the existing treaty of 1800 between Prussia and Russia." In other words, Prussia, having concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with France, assured Russia, then at war with France, that she could count on her carrying out the terms of a previous alliance. This was surely the acme of duplicity!

It was at this juncture that, on the 25th of July, Laforest, the French Minister in Berlin, imparted to Haugwitz the details of the Constitution of the Confederation of the Rhine, which was to be under the "protection" of the Emperor Napoleon. As a matter of fact, Talleyrand, by way of assuaging the wound, had assured Lucchesini, the Prussian Minister in Paris, that the Emperor was quite ready to welcome the formation of a similar confederation for northern Germany under the hegemony of the King of Prussia, who would also be at liberty to assume the imperial title if he cared to do so. This overture had the effect of calming Berlin's uneasiness, but it was quickly revived on the reception of a letter from Lucchesini which infuriated the Court of Berlin. Lucchesini, puzzled to know what was going on between England and France, had as the result of prolonged potations succeeded in extracting the secret from Lord Yarmouth—France was making preparations to take Hanover away from the Hohenzollerns and



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

restore it to the British Crown. "*In vino veritas*," added Luchesi. Prussia felt she had been atrociously deceived. In accepting Hanover from the hands of "Bonaparte," she had incurred the contempt of Europe, and now her prey was to be snatched from her grasp! On the 9th of August a Council summoned by Frederick William and informed of these facts decided to place the army on a war footing. In vain did Napoleon warn the distracted Prussians to beware of "the absurd and foolish rumours" repeated to them by their Minister in Paris. They continued to go mad with excitement over the various reports they received. The mobilisation of the Prussian army was carried out, and the slightest incident might lead to war.

Napoleon refused to contemplate the possibility, because there was nothing in the world he desired less. Even as late as the 17th of July he gave Berthier orders to arrange for the return of the Grand Army, which was still encamped in Germany. But, meanwhile, the attitude of Prussia was destroying the elaborate scaffolding which for the last six months the Emperor had been building up in Paris with a view to securing a general peace. Russia, now assured of Prussia's support, refused to ratify Oubril's treaty. On the 6th of September Frederick William wrote to the Tsar a letter in which he undertook to attack "the disturber of the Universe," of whom he was still officially the ally. Napoleon could hardly believe his senses. More anxious than ever to secure peace, which he regarded as absolutely essential for the internal organisation of the Empire, he showed, for the first time, an extreme repugnance to return to camp life. Moreover, war with the nephews of Frederick the Great, whom he almost idolised, was particularly distasteful to him. Thus, when Knobelsdorf arrived in Paris on the 19th of September, as the bearer of a veritable ultimatum, he sent him word that he regarded war between the two countries as "absolutely monstrous."

At the same time it was useless to fly in the face of facts, though it was only on the 20th, after having written to say that "Prussia was throwing off the mask," that the Emperor gave fresh orders to his corps commanders and warned the members of the Confederation of the Rhine. In any case he was perfectly cool and collected, certain of victory if he were irrevocably forced to fight,

## THE CONSEQUENCES

and inspiring those about him with his own confidence. On the 12th of September, Talleyrand wrote that the Emperor would enter Berlin "on the anniversary of his entry into Vienna," which, as we shall see, did not err on the side of optimism.

Prussia was in a state of delirious excitement. Knobelsdorf had been told to demand the immediate evacuation of the whole of Germany by France, and Napoleon was given a fortnight to carry out the operation.

The ultimatum did not reach Paris until the Emperor had left. He had gone to Germany, where, with prodigious energy, he was making up for the time his incredulity had wasted. Meanwhile, Berlin's rage and fury knew no bounds. Queen Louisa held review after review to which the King followed her, his features distorted with anxiety. But the Army leaders, above all, indulged in the most insensate behaviour. Prince Louis Ferdinand, Marshal von Hohenlohe, Reuchel and Blücher all guaranteed swift victory. "I shall dig the grave of every Frenchman to be found on the banks of the Rhine!" exclaimed the latter. Young officers came to sharpen their swords on the steps of the French Embassy. They were encouraged by a Colonel, who shouted, "There is no need of swords; sticks and staves are good enough for those dogs of Frenchmen!"

Suddenly, on the 12th and 13th of September, without any declaration of war having been made, the Prussian troops entered Saxony. There was a fresh outburst of delirious excitement in Prussia. "In three months with two-thirds of their number we shall whip those devils across the Rhine!" exclaimed Major Kneps. At the corner of every street in Berlin people were counting their chickens before they were hatched.

The Emperor would have liked to laugh at these rodomontades, but he was filled with bitter regrets. All hope of peace had vanished. As a matter of fact, Lauderdale for months past had been using all his ingenuity to bring about the failure of the negotiations with which he had been entrusted, and now demanded his papers. Needless to say Vienna was following events with ill-concealed and passionate interest. As may well be imagined the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine had merely accentuated the ill-feeling already provoked there by the Treaty of Pressburg.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Moreover, throughout Europe an almost universal movement of hostility against France was beginning to make itself felt. Spain, which had been closely bound to her for four years, saw an opportunity for breaking her bonds; the wretched Godoy was carrying on a secret correspondence with the King of Prussia offering friendship and, on the 5th of October, he, too, threw off the mask and issued a manifesto calling upon the Spaniards to prepare for war. Even in Italy the clergy, whom the attitude of Rome had made less well disposed to France, were raising an agitation, and, in case of defeat, the Emperor had everything to fear from that quarter. But Napoleon knew no fear. He felt he could place greater reliance on public opinion in France than he had done before Austerlitz, and that it would be solidly behind him against a Prussia who had been guilty of felony or in any case of gross provocation. "The day on which she loses her first battle," d'Hauterive had written to Talleyrand, "Prussia will cease to exist." No one was more convinced of this than the Emperor. The Prussian army had no terrors for him; with a sweep of the hand he would brush aside this army which he felt was degenerate, and then "Prussia would cease to exist."

Europe  
Ready to  
Take Up  
Arms.

Napoleon  
Certain of  
Victory.

For sources and bibliography see the preceding chapter.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE PRUSSIAN CAMPAIGN AND THE BERLIN DECREE

The two armies face to face. Saalfeld. The Landgrafenberg. The Battle of Jena. Rout of Hohenlohe. Davout defeats Brunswick at Auerstädt. A glorious pursuit. Entry into Berlin. The fall of Prenzlau and Lübeck. "The Emperor whistled!" The news received in Paris; campaign in favour of peace. Napoleon, in Berlin, decides to outlaw England. The inauguration of the Continental Blockade. The "Orders in Council." The Berlin Decree. It is both legally and practically justified, but its consequences prove disastrous.

**O**N the 4th of October the whole of the Grand Army was concentrated in Franconia, within a radius of thirty miles of Bamberg. It consisted of 166,000 men under the command of Davout, Soult, Bernadotte, Lannes, Ney, and Augereau, while Murat had resumed command of the cavalry corps, which was 18,267 strong. On this date, the Prussians, who occupied a line nearly ninety miles long, between Eisenach and Zwickau, were divided into two main armies; the Duke of Brunswick's forces, numbering some 60,500 men, were honoured by the presence of the King, and even of the Queen, while Hohenlohe's contingent consisted of 46,500 men, reinforced by Saxons who had been compelled to enter into alliance with Prussia. The enemy's inferiority lay less in numbers than in the mediocrity of his leaders, and was revealed from the very beginning by the lack of any definite plan of campaign. Thus, it was only the overweening presumption of Berlin that could possibly have led to the launching of the ultimatum received by Napoleon on the 7th of October.

The field of operations which was soon to be vastly extended now lay revealed; in fact, it rapidly spread from the tableland of Saxony to the shores of the Baltic, where, when the great blow had been struck, the defeated Prussian armies were to be brought to bay. This great blow was to be delivered between the valleys of the Saale and the Ilm, tributaries

The Two  
Armies  
Face to Face.

Saalfeld.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

of the Elbe, separated by the Landgrafenberg, the plateau at the foot of which lies the town of Jena.

But even before the 9th the Emperor had already made for the Saxon plateau, and it was here that, on the 10th, he came into touch with the enemy. On that day Lannes, at Saalfeld, ran into Hohenlohe's strong advance guard, which was under the command of Prince Louis Ferdinand; he broke through it and decimated it, while the unfortunate prince was killed just as he was taking flight. The Prussians, discomfited from the very beginning by Napoleon's rapid advance, had already lost the valley of the Saale, which meant that they had been outflanked. But the Emperor had no intention of leaving in his rear the Prussian army which was massed in Weimar, west of the Landgrafenberg.

The Landgrafenberg. He had arranged to make a simultaneous attack in front and on both wings, and proceeding himself to the plateau, he sent Ney and Augereau south and Bernadotte and Davout north to attack the enemy's flanks. Brunswick saw the manœuvre which threatened to surround him, and tried to convey his army, which constituted the bulk of the Prussian forces, in a north-easterly direction in order to reach the corps under Davout and Bernadotte with all speed, while Hohenlohe remained in Weimar with his 46,000 men. The latter, indeed, did not think he could be attacked on the plateau, which he regarded as being inaccessible to a large army on the Jena side, and thus providing cover for his forces. But when the Emperor arrived on the afternoon of the 13th at Jena, he upset all these calculations, for, after a rapid survey of the plateau, he sent the whole of Lannes' Corps and the Guard to occupy it, and on the morning of the 14th these 40,000 men were massed there in a most advantageous position, dominating the Prussian camp, which, moreover, was going to allow itself to be taken by surprise.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ignorant of the forces with which he had to deal, for he had no idea that Brunswick's army had gone in a northerly direction, Napoleon's first step was to take the precaution of discovering all he could about the Prussian front line which a thick fog prevented him from seeing. After the preliminary engagements, the latter

## THE PRUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

retreated so far that before half-past nine the French were masters of the greater part of the plateau. Just at this moment Ney made his appearance there on the left of the French line, while Soult was attacking on the right of it, and Augereau, also reaching the plateau to the extreme left of the French, supported Ney and Lannes on the flank. Hohenlohe still appeared to be ignorant of the menace hanging over him and hardly responded. Ney, ever impetuous, suddenly speeded up the attack without waiting for the orders of the Emperor, who, before engaging all along the line, wished to give Soult time to get into closer touch with him. Ney's risky venture was repulsed and he even had to beat a somewhat hasty retreat. It was necessary to support him.

Napoleon was all the more ready to do so, seeing that the Prussians, encouraged by their temporary success, were advancing. At this very moment Soult joined up with the Emperor, and the latter felt that the battle could now be resumed with every chance of victory. He therefore launched a mass attack with all his forces. Austerlitz had been a cunning manoeuvre; Jena was

Battle of  
Jena.

destined to be a terrific knock-out blow. Under the fierce thrust of those brazen forces the Prussian line wavered and soon broke. Hohenlohe, whose front had been driven in, found that he had also been outflanked. He ordered a retreat, but it was too late; the retreat developed into a rout, which put the finishing touch to the disaster. Having tried to stop the retreat on the western edge of the plateau, the Prussians were immediately hurled back on Weimar by the forces under Soult and Lannes, and cut down in their flight, which quickly became a scene of the wildest confusion, by Murat's cavalry.

It was a regular avalanche of distracted soldiers who, with the French close on their heels, poured down from the plateau into the valley of the Ilm, dragging along with them in their panic the Saxons who had barely reached the field of battle. Hohenlohe, wounded, was whirled along in the general flight. He galloped through Weimar and left it again post-haste, swept along in the mad rush of his men, who, in the streets of the town, were already being menaced by the bayonets of Ney and Lannes and the swords of Murat's cavalry. At three o'clock the whole battlefield was in the hands of the French. The Prussian dead and wounded

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

numbered 12,000 ; 15,000 prisoners had been taken, 200 guns and hundreds of standards. At four o'clock the Emperor entered Weimar. After making arrangements to leave Ney's contingent there, he went back to bed in the castle at Jena.

\* \* \* \*

On his return to the castle he imagined that he had defeated the whole Prussian army, and was perhaps surprised at not having seen either Davout or Bernadotte arrive on the scene of action.

The fact of the matter was that just when Napoleon was breaking Hohenlohe's line, Brunswick, who was retiring in a northerly direction with superior forces, had run into Davout's corps, which consisted of only 28,750 men as compared with his adversary's 65,000.

Bernadotte, occupying a position between the Grand Army and Davout's corps, was not destined to serve any useful purpose ; menaced by the approach of Brunswick, Davout had appealed in vain for help from his superior, but the latter had urged the Emperor's orders, which he had misinterpreted, to justify him in staying where he was, between Jena and Auerstädt.

Brunswick's army now fell in with Gudin's division, and Friant and Morant with their divisions immediately hurried up to the latter's support, together with Davout. Davout, by an absolutely miraculous exercise of authority, saved the situation, which for a moment had been gravely compromised, and after some hours of fierce hand-to-hand fighting against odds of three to

Auerstädt. one, in the fields round Auerstädt, he not only held

a whole army in check, but actually forced Brunswick to beat a somewhat disorderly retreat. When the latter fell mortally wounded, the King was obliged to take command ; he counted on reaching Weimar and joining Hohenlohe, whose forces he imagined were still intact. Hardly had he reached the outskirts of the town when he fell in with the distracted and disorderly mob of Prussians, who had just been defeated at Jena. Staggered by the spectacle of this rout, the forces which had been defeated at Auerstädt also took to their heels. Swept in a northerly direction by the panic-stricken flight of their comrades, they disbanded, and during the night of

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the 14th to the 15th, while the Queen was hastening in tears towards Berlin, the King himself made preparations to leave the army and take refuge in East Prussia, avoiding his own capital from fear of meeting with a bad reception there.

\* \* \* \* \*

During that same night of the 14th to the 15th, Napoleon, who by that time was more or less informed of the twofold discomfiture of the Prussian armies, drew up the plan of pursuit which was to enable him to complete the annihilation of the defeated enemy's forces. Henry Houssaye describes it as that "centrifugal pursuit," in which the French army corps were suddenly dispersed, and were rushed headlong forward to overtake the Prussian corps scattered far and wide in panic-stricken flight. By the 16th, the whole of the armies were on the move ; Murat was the first to get under way ; he sent Lasalle's brigade ahead and from Saxony to the shores of the Baltic the latter, if I may be allowed to use the expression, galloped the whole time in the vanguard of glory. Erfurt, where Mollendorf, Hohenlohe's lieutenant, had taken refuge with 6,000 men, surrendered to Murat, together with the whole of this contingent, and although, thanks to a lie, Blücher's corps escaped Lasalle, the latter did not experience much difficulty in catching it up before long. Each one of the Marshals, drunk with joy and greedy of glory, wished to do better than his neighbour. Davout made for Leipzig in order to cut off Hohenlohe's retreat. The latter, with the enemy close on his heels, reached Magdeburg, but no sooner had he done so than the French Marshals appeared in the plain and threatened the town. On the way, Bernadotte, who felt he must make good his mistake of the 14th, had captured Halle and with it part of Duke Eugene of Württemberg's corps. The latter, who had not fought on the 14th, had made his 30,000 men advance, and leaving 6,000 in the hands of Bernadotte, fled in his turn in the direction of Magdeburg. But he and Hohenlohe had immediately to beat a precipitate retreat from this stronghold, which Ney soon afterwards blockaded and forced the 24,000 men, whom the Prussian General had left there, to capitulate.

All that remained to Hohenlohe was a body of 20,000 men, whom he still hoped to restore to his King. But shortly after-



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wards, before they had had time to cross the Oder, they were forced to surrender. Meanwhile, Murat had opened up the road to Berlin for the Emperor, who advanced rapidly along it, and

**Napoleon in Berlin.** on the 27th made a triumphal entry into the Prussian capital. It was from here that he took

supreme command of the pursuit, which grew more fast and furious every day; the Marshals indulged in what Napoleon described as a regular hunting down of the unfortunate troops who were wandering about, distracted and forlorn, between the Elbe and the Oder. In Berlin, the Emperor blew the mort, and presently distributed the spoils of the chase.

Hohenlohe had Murat and Lannes hot on his heels. They were trying to cut him off from the Oder, and should he attempt to reach one of the Baltic ports, to get there before him. The details of this pursuit read like a fairy-tale. Cut off at every turn, the Prussian corps gradually melted away, until at last, on the

**Fall of Prenzlau.** 28th, the Prince, who was blockaded in Prenzlau, capitulated with his 16,000 infantry and his six

cavalry regiments—all that remained of the army that had been defeated at Jena.

At the news of this disaster, Blücher, who had tried to rally the Prussian forces, hurried westward, still hoping to reach one of the Pomeranian ports and take ship there. But Murat, with the heroic Lasalle still in the van, had already reached the Baltic and fell back on Pomerania. That legendary hussar, Lasalle, with a body of only 700 horse, forced the town of Stettin, where 5,000 of the enemy had taken refuge, to capitulate. But the main objective was still the capture of Blücher. He had 25,000 men, but, hard pressed by Bernadotte and Soult, he also found himself cut off from the Baltic by Murat's cavalry. On the 5th of November, driven by the three Marshals to the frontier of the neutral republic of Lübeck, the impetuous Prussian did not hesitate to violate it and hurled himself into the free city. The French Marshals followed him headlong. Driven out of the town and once more brought to a standstill by Denmark, whose army barred the way

**Capitulation of Magdeburg.** into her tiny State, he was obliged to capitulate at Schwartau and to hand over his twenty-seven battalions and his fifty-two squadrons to the enemy. Two days later, the capitulation of Magdeburg,

## THE PRUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

with 24,000 men, to Ney completed the Prussian disaster. "Sire," wrote Murat to Napoleon, as he returned his sword to its scabbard, "the fight is ended for lack of combatants." Never had warrior chief better right to speak the language of Corneille

than Murat had after those glorious days. "The Emperor Whistled." "The Emperor whistled," wrote Heinrich Heine sarcastically, "and Prussia was no more."

\* \* \* \*

Nowhere should these events have inspired deeper emotion than in Paris. And the news of Jena did, indeed, at first give rise to the greatest enthusiasm. If we are to believe the police, the twenty-second bulletin, which arrived soon afterwards, "sent a thrill"

through every heart in the city. There was a boom in stocks and shares, *rentes* rising to seventy-six, a figure at which they had never yet stood. In the workshops the men crowed over the "down-fall" of the arrogant Prussians. But somehow the result produced was not what it had been after Marengo and Austerlitz, when all the wagging tongues had been silenced. So great was the public desire for peace that it even surpassed the gratification of pride, and people went so far as to say that such a complete triumph for the Emperor would no doubt encourage him to prove intractable towards Russia, and the prospect of a fresh struggle, which would almost certainly be long and arduous, against that "snow mountain" cast a gloom everywhere. The Senate decided to send a deputation to Berlin, not so much to congratulate the Emperor on his victory as to persuade him to make

peace. Napoleon gave the deputation an extremely cold reception. He was ready to make peace, but only when Russia showed herself prepared to fight with him against the "tyranny" of England. Meanwhile, in Paris the political world had to refrain from showing the slightest sign of dissenting from this view, though the smallest reverse, even of a temporary nature, would have been sufficient to cast doubt upon the fortunes of the Great Man, who had made up his mind to subject everything to his rule.

The News Received in Paris.

Campaign in Favour of Peace.

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## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Never for a single moment had Napoleon doubted that Prussia, like Austria and Russia before her, had been drawn into the lists through the intrigues of England alone. Clearly that odious English Government would never make peace until it had a dagger at its throat, or rather until it was threatened by an economic catastrophe which the Emperor intended to hasten on by means of tactics carried out on a grand scale.

Every day he became more and more convinced that England could be brought to her knees by being faced with ruin. She had

command of the sea, and since Trafalgar he had, for the time being, given up all idea of disputing it with his rival. But he had command of the land.

Now this "nation of shopkeepers" was more vulnerable than any other, owing to the fact that for the last fifty years she had begun to neglect agriculture and was therefore more dependent than the rest on continental produce; and also, since she had overdeveloped her industries, she could not, without incurring the risk of bankruptcy, do without her European customers. Now, ever since 1792, the English had been closely blockading the French coast. Why not retaliate,

therefore, by another kind of blockade, and since the English were closing the seas, close the land to them? But to be efficacious this blockade would have to include the whole of Europe, and in time a wall would have to be raised which, from the Balkan peninsula to Spain and from Holland to Finland, would completely shut out all British goods. When this had been done, this "nation of shopkeepers," deprived of her source of wealth, would beg for mercy.

As a matter of fact, the idea, which has sometimes been represented as eminently characteristic of Napoleon, had been in the air for the last ten years. Moreover, there was no genius in it, and the Emperor never regarded it as anything except a grandiose expedient which could be justified only by its success and the results obtained therefrom. Here again Napoleon borrowed an idea conceived by the Committee of Public Safety, even down to its curses against "Carthage," though he demanded from its stubborn and extended application results which the incoherent and necessarily circumscribed policy of the Republic had never achieved.

## THE PRUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

Ever since the rupture of the Peace of Amiens he had had it in mind, as others had also done. As early as the 25th of July, 1805, he had received from the Comte de Montgaillard, one of those "makers of plans" of whom Europe was at that time full, a memorial in which the ideas destined to inspire his great measure were fairly clearly expressed. But the Emperor was far too deliberate not to weigh the matter carefully. He considered he had the right to strike, but for that right to be patent to all, he was waiting for the scandalous behaviour of the English themselves to provoke general indignation. As had been the case at Fontenoy, he wished "Messieurs the English to shoot first." He had not long to wait. On the 16th of May, 1806, an Order in Council which, according to all the evidence, violated international

### The Order in Council.

law, declared a blockade of all the ports and the coast from the Elbe to Brest, even though no effective blockade existed. Talleyrand expressed

the opinion of many when, at the Emperor's demand, he drew up a memorial on the subject, and reached the same conclusion as Montgaillard. The Emperor would have liked to wait still longer; his plans were maturing. He was studying conditions, but the principle had already been admitted. In order to apply it, it was necessary for him to have control of the Continent. Now the collapse of Prussia placed an extremely important strip of coast, from Lübeck to Danzig, in his hands, while his victory was sure to confirm his authority over the rest of Europe.

Maintaining "that it is a law of nature to use against the enemy the weapons he himself employs and to fight him in the same way as he fights you, when he disregards every idea of justice and every liberal sentiment, that is the result of civilisation . . ." the Emperor

### The Berlin Decree.

issued a decree containing the following clause: "The British Isles are declared to be in a state of blockade. All commerce and all correspondence with the British Isles are forbidden." The decree, which is extremely long, adds nothing essential either to this preamble or this clause. Barère had not demanded more in the Convention; but the decree was not only to be applied—and with the utmost severity—in all the countries that were either subject to France or bound to her by close ties, but was

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

also to be imposed on every State which, in one way or another, enjoyed or wished to enjoy the benefits of an alliance or even of mere friendship with her, for which the application of the "continental blockade" was thenceforward to be a *sine qua non*.

\* \* \* \* \*

We shall frequently have to return to the subject of the Blockade. But let us take this opportunity of pointing out that it was legally and practically justified to a far greater extent than many historians have admitted. A weapon of war directed against another war measure, it was calculated to reduce a whole country to starvation, but only in order to oblige it to make peace. I would even add that, though it was fairly generally regarded as an extravagant gesture, the system might quite well, in the long run, have secured the desired end. In due course I shall describe the condition of England as early as 1811, as a result of this blockade, and show that it was by no means optimistic to imagine that through it she would probably have been driven to beg for mercy two years later.

But although this decision was both legally and practically justified, it was in other respects so big with serious issues that it forced the Emperor, both literally and meta-

**The Blockade  
Legally and  
Practically  
Justified.**

phorically, to enter upon an even more fatal path than the foundation of the Grand Empire had done. The latter could be circumscribed or extended at the Master's will ; but for the Blockade

not to be a mere empty threat it was necessary for the whole of the Continent to bow to the dominion of France or to enter into alliance with her before two years had passed. If a single State, refused to apply the "system," it would have to be constrained to do so by force of arms, unless the whole system was to crumble to bits. And thus, tied hand and foot to the system, the Emperor himself would no longer be in a position to hold back or to call a halt.

But if France, whose industries benefited by the measure and who was, moreover, animated by a virulent hatred of "Albion," nevertheless found it far from easy to endure the burdensome results of the Blockade, the disapproval of the other countries was bound to be very much more acute—Napoleon was to

## THE PRUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

call upon millions of people to forgo their comforts for a period which remained quite indefinite. Now nations are far more ready to sacrifice their liberties than to subject themselves to daily inconvenience. And thus the proclamation of the Blockade, even after it had been officially accepted by the Governments of the whole Continent, was destined to rouse the resentment of the various peoples even more than any of the political and social reforms which, as we shall see, the Emperor already had so much

**Its Results** difficulty in getting them to accept. Albert Sorel  
**Disastrous.** declares that the Continental Blockade was "the *raison d'être* of the Grand Empire." But I agree with Edouard Driault that the famous historian is here guilty of exaggeration. We have already seen that, in addition to the necessity of reducing England to beg for mercy, Napoleon had many reasons for wishing to subject the Continent to his rule. But hitherto he had been able to proceed with the work of conquest in a leisurely fashion which he could no longer do after embarking on this new enterprise. Though the Blockade may not have been "the charter of the Napoleonic Empire," it did at all events force it to be established on a vast scale and organised with a febrile speed which dangerously undermined its strength.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

Deplorable condition of Prussia. The Tsar remains obdurate. Napoleon faced by the Polish and Turkish problems; Poland desires rehabilitation and Islam wishes to retaliate. Sebastiani at Constantinople. Bellicose attitude of the Tsar. The entry into Poland. The first battles; painful nature of the campaign. The siege of Danzig. Eylau. Europe believes that Napoleon has suffered a severe reverse. Bad effect of this in Paris; the Russians exultant; the Prussians full of hope; Austria wavering. English reverse before Constantinople. The Emperor organises his summer campaign. Friedland.

EUROPE seemed, for the time being, but little inclined to accept the iron law of the Blockade, or, for the matter of that, any of the laws laid down by Napoleon. True, Jena and its consequences produced a profound impression, but, unlike Austerlitz, this stupendous battle, during which the French were victorious for twenty-nine days, did not seem to lead to a decision.

Prussia, indeed, appeared to have been finally routed. The Court and the Government, who had taken refuge on the north-eastern confines of the country, were making timid and, moreover,

**Deplorable  
Condition of  
Prussia.**

futile efforts to appease the terrific wrath of the Emperor and to avert the complete annihilation of the kingdom of Frederick the Great. Nevertheless, the Prussian people seemed to be awakening; a secret movement of patriotism was springing up out of the ashes of defeat, and this lent the King temporary courage. After having meditated accepting the worst possible conditions, he again flung himself into the arms of the Tsar. But henceforward Prussia was a broken reed, as far as Russia was concerned, and Alexander sent the Corsican Pozzo di Borgo as envoy to Vienna. He was the most rabid of all European agents against his fellow-islander Napoleon, and the Tsar entrusted him with the task of negotiating an alliance "for the purpose of preventing the total ruin of the world which was confronted with such a terrible

## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

menace." But Austria was more terrified than ever. "If I declare myself," wrote Francis II, "I must expect to have all Bonaparte's forces on my hands; I shall run the risk of being overwhelmed and then the situation will be far worse for your master. . . . I will be perfectly frank with you; I shall put off fighting till the last possible moment."

Thus Napoleon found himself confronted by Russia alone; but he was somewhat anxious notwithstanding, for, as though warned by some presentiment, he had always dreaded having to tackle this "snow mountain."

The Tsar's obduracy, moreover, brought him face to face with problems which he did not consider were yet ripe—the Polish

**The Tsar**                      problem and the Turkish problem. He now found  
**Obdurate,**                    himself obliged to enter Poland. That unfortunate  
country, so cruelly dismembered at the end of the

eighteenth century, was not dead. Torn to bits and cast into the tomb by the last partition, she still breathed—a miracle

**The Polish**                    of national vitality!—inside her thrice-sealed  
**Problem,**                    sepulchre. From Posen and Warsaw, which had  
remained in the hands of Prussia, to Cracow, the

prey of Austria, and Vilna, the prey of Russia, a great hope of liberation had been born of the victories won during the past year by Napoleon over the sons of the despots who had suppressed her. France had always been indignant at the various partitions of Poland, and to restore this slaughtered State to life once more in central Europe and thus repair an abominable crime appeared extremely tempting at this juncture. But the Emperor was not the man to settle a problem over which he had not had the opportunity of reflecting and, profoundly realistic, he mistrusted sentimentality. Though by no means insensible to the misfortunes of Poland, he was yet fully aware of the weaknesses that had brought about her ruin. He regarded her as a nation of paladins, knights, demagogues and poets, a people altogether volatile and fickle; clattering swords, brilliant costumes and sonorous phrases might deceive others but not him. What good would this charming but unreliable Poland be to him? If he were to restore her to her old position he would most certainly create for himself, not a supporter but an infallible source of anxiety, a constant danger; she might even constitute an



insuperable barrier to any peace with the three Powers whose conquests had been menaced and whose prey had been torn from their grasp. For he was already dreaming of something more than peace with Russia and hoping for an alliance which would enable him to level a mortal blow at England. Was this the time to create a certain source of trouble between Russia and himself?

In the East he found himself confronted by another problem—the eternal Balkan question. Here, too, the oppressed nations

**The Turkish Problem.**      were in a state of ferment and seeking a deliverer. But they were turning their eyes towards St. Petersburg, and if they gained their freedom,

apparently it would be for the benefit of Russia. The latter, bringing pressure to bear on the Sultan, who was already "a sick man," had prevailed upon the Porte to place Christian Governors, in the shape of Greek "hospodars," at the disposal of Wallachia and Moldavia, and the St. Petersburg Government regarded these officials as agents who would lure these "principalities" over to Russia. This in itself was a striking proof of the decay of the Ottoman Empire. Only a little while back Bonaparte, as First Consul, had accepted the principle of a partition, which would shortly be necessary if Russia alone was not to snap up this decadent Empire. But Napoleon's views on the subject were not quite clear, for he was torn between two alternatives—that of protecting the Ottoman Empire by binding it closely to his own, and that of allowing Russia to take her share of it as the result of a partition which would doubtless take place before long. Meanwhile, Sebastiani, who had been sent to Constantinople in 1805, had been urging Sultan Selim for the last six months to be on his guard against the nefarious designs of Russia, and while waiting for something better to turn up, had prevailed upon him to recall the "hospodars" appointed under pressure from the Tsar.

The difficulty was to infuse any energy into this vast Turkish Empire, which was old and almost worn out. But Sebastiani did

**Sebastiani in Constantinople.**      his best; convinced that before long England would endeavour, by force of arms if necessary, to win the Sultan over to the Coalition, he urged him to organise the defence of the Straits, and being an excellent soldier, as well as a skilled diplomat, helped in the task himself.

## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

But Napoleon regarded this support given to the Porte merely as a precautionary measure, and refrained from binding himself to the Ottoman Empire by any hard-and-fast agreement. Like Poland, Turkey was for him merely one of the pieces on the huge chess-board on which he was playing his game. "Don't be too sure about the restoration of Poland," he wrote on the 2nd of December to Murat, who had been dispatched as a brilliant herald to Warsaw.

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The Tsar seemed to be blind to the twofold menace held over his head by the seething discontent of Poland and the partial re-awakening of Turkey, should Napoleon see fit to exploit them. Urged on by public opinion in Russia, which was more than ever hostile to France, he had no intention of making peace, and still less

of coming to an understanding. His friend, Adam Bellicose  
Attitude of the Tsar. Czartoryski, moreover, a Polish nobleman employed in the service of Russia, encouraged him to indulge in hopes of the revival of a Polish Kingdom,

to be established this time under the sceptre of the Romanoffs, and this provided him with a further reason for holding at arm's length the man towards whom the eyes of the Poles were at this time turned. He still cherished thoughts of victory and of winning glory by laying low the man who had hitherto swept all before him. Intoxicated by the idea, he had not the slightest intention of laying down his arms, even in response to the most advantageous offers, and his letters had the effect of temporarily reviving the drooping courage of the King of Prussia.

Napoleon was fully aware of the Tsar's attitude. He was faced with a difficult campaign, but if it was crowned with victory, it would save him the trouble of going to seek peace in Moscow or even in Vilna. The Senate was called upon to pass a Bill authorising the anticipation of the 1807 levy of conscripts. "I want 80,000 men," wrote the Emperor to Cambacérès. "They are required for the purpose of securing peace." Thus by the spring the army would be raised to the figure of 580,000 men, and Prussia, entirely occupied, would pay out the millions of money to be used against her Russian ally.

The Russian army, which had not been ready to intervene in

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

the autumn, was at last on the move. It had advanced as far as Warsaw, and 120,000 strong, under the command of General Bennigsen, lay spread out behind the Vistula. Three corps,

**The Russians in Poland.** under Davout, Augereau and Lannes, were ordered to march on Warsaw. Murat, by virtue of his

title of Prince, was made Commander-in-Chief of these 80,000 men. The Emperor preferred not to come into personal touch with the Poles during the first few days; his Marshals were to sound their sentiments and, above all, find out their strength. For the moment, from Posen to Warsaw, these liberated peoples were enthusiastically acclaiming the "deliverers" who had been sent to their help. This reception had the effect of turning Murat's head. He was already dreaming of a Polish throne, and with that extraordinary childishness which, in his case, was combined with the heroism of a born swashbuckler and Gascon cunning, he refused to wear anything but Polish costume. The Emperor, who saw that his excitement was becoming uncontrollable, decided to set out for Warsaw.

He entered that city on the 19th of December and was greeted with transports of joy by which he, in his turn, was touched.

**Napoleon in Warsaw.** "We must fight," he declared to the paladins who overwhelmed him with homage. "The nobility must get into the saddle. . . . Perhaps your misfortunes will end well. It will be a case of resurrection from the dead." During the course of festivities organised by Talleyrand, who had joined him, he behaved with the utmost amiability; he was also dazzled. "What lovely women!" he exclaimed. . . . Among them he picked out one who was shortly to become, if not the object of one of the great passions of his life, at least that of the tenderest affection. I refer to Marie Walewska. And this strange outburst of feeling, though it may not have changed his settled views, perhaps brought some influence to bear on them. Nevertheless, he continued to be circumspect, ever bearing in mind, even before he had seriously decided to cross swords with his adversary, the end he had in view, which was to defeat Alexander, but only with the object of conciliating him, and to conquer not Russia but Russia's ruler.

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## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

The Polish campaign had opened on the 23rd of December. Bennigsen, having prudently retired once more behind the Vistula, was meditating recrossing it with all his forces further north at Modlin, in order to cut off Napoleon from Berlin and the sea. But Lannes pulled him up short at Czarnovo, and on

### The Polish Campaign.

the 26th it was the Emperor himself who took the offensive. The battles of Golymin and Pultusk, which were hotly disputed and more murderous than the great battles in Saxony had been, in the end forced Bennigsen to beat a retreat. But he was able to do so without being harassed, and consequently imagined himself entitled to boast that he had brought about the failure of Napoleon's manœuvre. He hoped that the weather, which had become terrible, would wear out the French troops, against whom he intended to make a counter-attack before the end of the winter.

As a matter of fact, the winter had already set in, a winter, moreover, that was worse than rigorous. It was incredibly wet, the rain falling in torrents and turning the whole of Poland into an icy quagmire. "God has created a fifth element for Poland," declared Napoleon—"mud!" And he put a stop to the advance and stationed his forces round about Warsaw. Imperial Headquarters had come to the conclusion that, although the Russians might not perhaps be equal to driving back the Grand Army, they were more capable of putting up a stiff fight than the Prussians had been. "The Russians are good fighters," wrote Caulaincourt; "the roads are so bad and the days so short that one can do them very little harm." The Emperor had resolved to postpone his great blow until the huge reinforcements, which he was summoning from every part of the Empire, should once more have made the Grand Army irresistible. He returned to Warsaw on the 1st of January, 1807.

But, to prevent the war from fizzling out entirely, he was anxious to have done with what remained of Prussia. Only two strongholds were still in her hands—Breslau and Danzig.

### Siege of Danzig.

On the 7th of January Breslau fell, but Danzig required a greater effort. Napoleon created a tenth corps for "old Lefebvre," and entrusted him with the task of capturing Danzig. Being a man of but mediocre endowments, it took him many long and weary weeks to reach a successful issue.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Bennigsen had no intention of allowing the Emperor to take up his winter quarters in peace. By dint of repeatedly proclaiming his victory in the first Polish battles he had come to believe in it himself. He now proposed to outmanœuvre Napoleon, and by crossing the Vistula to the extreme north, between Thorn and Marienburg, and then proceeding to the Baltic coast, to cut off the French army from the sea and surround it, and incidentally to raise the siege of Danzig. But he thought that in the region of Osterode he would fall in only with Bernadotte's corps, which he would take by surprise. The latter, however, thanks to the alertness of Ney, who was next to him, was warned in time and barred the road to Mohrungen, on the 25th of January, while Ney informed the Emperor. Napoleon immediately decided to allow Bennigsen to pass in order that he might attack him on the flank and force him into the sea. But an order, intercepted by a party of Cossacks, revealed to Bennigsen the danger he was running. He called a halt, and by abandoning his own plan of action also upset the Emperor's calculations. The latter, however, hoped at least to be able to give his adversary a severe lesson,

Eylau. and believing that he could surprise him while he was in full retreat, he hurried after him and caught him up on the frozen plain of Eylau, on the 7th of February. The Russian General turned round on him and accepted battle.

He was doubtless aware that the French army was inferior in numbers to his own. As a matter of fact, it consisted only of 65,000 men as compared with his 80,000. Moreover, on the previous day Ney, having encountered Lestocq's corps—the last remnants of the Prussian army—and having forced it to retreat, had taken 10,000 men away in order to follow him up. This meant that Napoleon's fighting strength was further reduced to 55,000 men. The latter immediately recalled Ney to support his left wing, and also urged Davout to collect the main French forces with all possible speed and come to the support of his right. The Emperor destined the leading part for the victor of Auerstädt; while the Russian centre was being held, the Marshal was to make a fierce thrust at the enemy's left, overpower it and drive it back in confusion on to Bennigsen's army, which would thus be demoralised and fall back.

Though he had been driven out of Eylau on the previous day,

## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

Bennigsen was not only determined to hold his ground, but also to hit back. And when, after three hours of heavy firing, he considered that his adversary could hold out no longer, he pushed forward. But at this juncture Napoleon, informed that Davout had come up and driven back the Russian left, gave Augereau's corps orders to attack the enemy's centre. Augereau, however, had been considerably weakened by the fighting that had already taken place; moreover, Bennigsen's artillery was far superior to the French. Mown down by grapeshot, Augereau's forces were driven back in disorder without having succeeded in breaking the Russian front, and in a vigorous counter-offensive, Bennigsen was already hurling heavy columns of troops against Eylau. The Emperor was determined to put a stop to this attack. "Are you going to allow us to be devoured by those devils?" he demanded of Murat. In a few minutes the Grand Duke of Berg had let loose his cavalry. The Russians put up a rare fight, and although an hour later their line was broken, it was only at the cost of cruel losses on the French side. One of the Russian columns, which had escaped Murat's charges, had reached the cemetery of Eylau, in which the Guard was awaiting orders. A terrific struggle, in which both sides suffered severe losses, took place in front of the cemetery. In the end the Guard drove back their assailants, who in their headlong flight fell into the hands of Murat and were slaughtered wholesale.

Thus the situation was saved in the centre, and Napoleon was waiting for Davout's advance on his right and Ney's on his left to decide the issue. But Ney was delayed for a time in joining up, and Davout, on his side, was meeting with determined resistance. He seemed to be on the point of carrying out an enveloping movement, however, when the enemy's weakened left received quite unexpected support. Lestocq and his Prussians, having escaped from Ney's clutches, had made a wide detour and came up behind the Russian army, with the result that 8,000 men, still fresh, swelled the ranks of the Russian left wing, which was in an extremely precarious situation. As a matter of fact, Davout, after a temporary repulse, succeeded in driving back the newcomers, but the diversion thus created enabled the Russian left to get away, and Bennigsen was at least able to escape the encircling movement to which he had been exposed. The arrival

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

of Ney, which threatened to complete his discomfiture, decided him to beat a retreat.

In the evening Bennigsen, worn out (his losses amounted to 30,000 killed and wounded), retired into the distance. But the French army was also sorely depleted (it had lost nearly 10,000 men), and thinking it would be foolish to make any serious attempt to pursue the enemy, the Emperor contented himself with setting Murat on his heels as far as Königsberg, in order to prevent Bennigsen from indulging in any further attempt to carry out his famous outflanking movement. The French army returned to camp and the Emperor took up his quarters at Osterode.

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Nevertheless Napoleon was disappointed and worried; his disappointment could even be read between the lines of his bulletin. He did not hide the losses he had sustained, hoping, by the frankness of his explanation, to forestall the exaggerated rumours which were

**Napoleon  
Disappointed.**

being circulated from the battlefield itself. The Russians, on the contrary, were proclaiming their victory even more loudly than they had done after the December engagements. In any case it was quite enough for the battle not to have ended in a brilliant French success for Europe, accustomed by this time to Napoleon's victories, to regard it as a French defeat. And encouraged thereby, the enemies of the Empire, from Naples to Berlin, not to mention in Paris, began to hold up their heads. The worst of the

**Eylau  
regarded as  
a French  
Defeat.**

matter was that pessimistic views were circulated from the imperial camp itself. "In four months we have not been able to reach any result with the Russians," wrote Caulaincourt, "and Heaven knows when the rest will join them!" And Talleyrand, summoned by the Emperor to Warsaw, was urged on all sides to bring his influence to bear on the Emperor to secure the peace, "which," it was furthermore declared, "all parties desire." From Berlin Clarke wrote: "Make peace, Monseigneur, in the interests of the Emperor, of France, of yourself, and, I will even add, of myself." Another correspondent wrote, "When one is far from the object of one's affections, one thinks too much!" They were nearly all of the same opinion. Kleist, sent by the

## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

King of Prussia on the 2nd of March to the Imperial Headquarters more as a spy than as a plenipotentiary, professed to have found the Emperor himself in extremely low spirits and his lieutenants at the end of their tether. From this he drew the conclusion that the Allies ought to hold out.

The letters sent from the army to Paris reflected this state of mind, with the result that, before long, perturbation in the capital amounted almost to panic. Public opinion there was undermined, as was also the case in the provinces, where, for the first time, difficulty was experienced in the levy of conscripts. Napoleon, from Poland, was obliged to remonstrate with his Ministers in this connection. "The mere idea that I shall encounter the slightest opposition in France is enough to make several Powers declare against me," he wrote. But doubt had already been cast on the Great Man's luck. The Eylau bulletin, far from having a calming effect, almost gave rise to despair, which was only increased by the letters which soon began to arrive from Poland. The movement, however, was not one of disaffection; for, according to the reports, people were, above all, anxious regarding "the risks the Emperor was running," and Savary attributed the sudden fall of Government securities on the Bourse merely to the fact that "the destiny of France and of every family in it seemed to hang on an artillery salvo." The echoes of this state of consternation did not take long to reach Napoleon, and in a letter to Fouché he expressed his indignation at the panic that had been created. The Minister could read the Master's rage between the lines and took active steps to allay the prevalent anxiety. He succeeded, though in Paris as well as in the provinces there still remained a passionate desire for peace which he made no attempt to conceal from Napoleon. "It's no use constantly talking about peace," the latter retorted; "that is the surest means of not securing it." Whereupon the tongue-wagging stopped, but public opinion still remained vaguely discomfited.

Needless to say, the diplomatic corps in Paris had given the Chancelleries of Europe an extremely exaggerated account of these moments of demoralisation, with the result that hatred of France revived.

The Russians were jubilant, though Bennigsen very wisely



wrote: "I feel that we ought to avoid giving battle to those devils." He qualified this statement, however, by adding: "Time will prove their undoing. Three hundred miles of Russian territory form a cordon they will not be able to break through." Count Romanzoff, the Russian Chancellor, was of the opinion that "Bonaparte's star" was at least "stationary"; but those about the Tsar declared that it was on the wane, that it was setting, in fact that it had actually set. Austria, strongly urged by Alexander to intervene, was sorely tempted to do so, though in reality she was still shaking in her shoes. "Beat them twice more," was the reply she sent to the Tsar. Eventually she decided to make one of those offers of mediation which, while gaining time, also provide an opportunity for acquiring something else; and on the 1st of April Baron Vincent was sent to broach the subject with Talleyrand, who had remained in Warsaw. Napoleon, who, as he confessed two years later to Vincent himself, was fearing active hostility on the part of Austria, was relieved by this offer of mediation. He regarded it, not without reason, as an acknowledgment of pusillanimity on the part of Vienna, and pretended to acquiesce in the idea. In the bosom of the Prussian Court, however, hope had once more revived, and the King hastened to Bartenstein, where he had an interview with the Tsar on the 26th of April. The strange treaty that resulted affords the best possible proof of the optimism with which Eylau had inspired Napoleon's enemies. The two defeated monarchs drew up a plan for the complete remodelling of Europe, which would hardly have been practicable even if they had been established on the Rhine. But, as we shall see, it was similar to the one they hoped to force upon the Emperor in 1813, when, as a matter of fact, they had actually reached Frankfort. In Prussia, though laid low and completely subjugated, was already reserving further magnificent prizes for herself.

The excuse for this presumptuous attitude was that among the various parties in Europe which were subject to Napoleon's influence, most encouraging movements could apparently be discerned. In Spain Godoy, who after Jena had withdrawn his anti-French appeals to his fellow-countrymen, renewed them again after Eylau. In Rome the Curia ventured to raise its voice and

## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

persuaded Pius VII to stand up to the Emperor. In Holland King Louis, in order to make himself acceptable to his subjects, was shutting his eyes to the intrigues of the friends of England, though the latter, strangely enough, did not take advantage of this troubled atmosphere to make landings at various points along the French coast.

As a matter of fact, she had just met with a severe rebuff on the other side of Europe. Her fleet, in order to win over Selim to the cause of the Allies, had attempted to force the Straits and menace Constantinople. On the 19th of February it had succeeded in getting through the Dardanelles, but when it had appeared before the city, which it imagined to be quite defenceless, it was met, thanks to Sebastiani's foresight and energy, by a bombardment, and had been obliged to retire discomfited. On the 3rd of March it had returned with reinforcements, but had again suffered such heavy losses that it had been forced definitely to abandon its design.

The British Government was so staggered that it seemed to be temporarily paralysed. But in Turkey itself the news of Eylau had swiftly damped the public ardour, and in Selim's immediate circle the idea of giving satisfaction to affronted England and becoming reconciled with the Tsar began to be openly discussed.

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In the whole of Europe the Emperor was the man who was least perturbed by his supposed defeat. Never had he been, spiritually, more free and unfettered. True, the annoyance he had felt after Eylau had induced one of those terrible stomach attacks which from time to time gave warning of the disease that was destined to kill him. But he hid his pain, and overcoming it, turned an extraordinarily brave face to the world. From that

“horrible village” of Osterode, in which he had established his General Headquarters, he set to work to organise his new armies. At Finkenstein, where he settled himself in greater comfort on the 1st of April (he even summoned the charming Marie Walewska there; her loving care and tenderness soothed him), he displayed incomparable mental energy and activity.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Far away though he was, he carried on the government of his Empire, even down to the smallest detail, while his eye roved from far distant Persia, whom he was trying to instigate against Russia, to the United States, whom he wished to lure into his crusade against England, "the tyrant of the seas."

The capture of Danzig on the 26th of May completed the work of securing the left wing of the Polish army. Moreover, Kalckreuth's 10,000 Prussians, who had been shut up there, were taken prisoner—they were the last remnant of Frederick William's army—and a quantity of most useful supplies was found. The army celebrated this success with great jubilation. In May it was once more in fine fettle. And on the 8th of June Berthier, with confidence once more restored, wrote to Talleyrand: "The army is mustering once more and is burning to be at grips again; the enemy is doing all the foolish things we want him to do."

The most foolish thing he could possibly do was to attack. Bennigsen had found it impossible to confine himself to the prudent temporising tactics he had himself advised after Eylau and which, in 1812, were to be put to the test. The fact of the matter was that in 1807 St. Petersburg was tired of the delays he so wisely advocated and gave him orders to renew the offensive. He obeyed, and made up his mind to repeat his outflanking manœuvre on the same ground as he had done in February; with this object in view, he advanced in a north-westerly direction. On the 5th of June his advance guards fell in with Ney at Guttstadt. The latter fell back, and having thus lured his enemy on, he turned on him, while the Emperor hastened to his support with the other corps.

Threatened with attack on his flank, Bennigsen tried to retreat. But it was too late. He was fast held by the enemy and was obliged to accept battle. The engagement took place at Heilsberg, before the Emperor and the rest of the army had arrived. Murat and Soult had made a violent attack with their 30,000 men on the 80,000 Russians, and the latter, though so far superior in numbers, again tried to escape. They succeeded in reaching the neighbourhood of Friedland, but Napoleon, who had arrived on the scene of action, decided not to allow them to escape in that direction. He was now so certain of his calculations and of the strength of his army that, on the 6th of June, he wrote to Fouché: "A week

## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

after you receive this letter all will be over." This was too moderate an estimate. When Fouché received the letter "all had been over" for some days.

On the 13th Bennigsen still had hopes of being able to reach Königsberg, which he intended to use as a base. By following the right bank of the Aller and taking cover behind it he might, perhaps, have been able to regain that city, which was held by a Prussian garrison. But when he reached the other side of Friedland, which stands on the left bank,

he was informed that a French corps, which seemed to be in a somewhat hazardous position, was sending out parties in the direction of that small town. It was Lannes who, ahead of the rest of the army by a march, had reached the heights on the left bank. He was well aware that he had the whole of the Russian army before him, but with the utmost intrepidity, he brazened it out, and sending an urgent appeal to the Emperor, immediately took steps to launch a vigorous attack. Bennigsen, convinced that chance had allowed an isolated corps to fall into his hands and that it was "hanging in mid-air," so to speak, made up his mind not to allow the chance of a brilliant success to escape him. He made his corps cross the river by means of hastily constructed bridges, across which he relied on being able to make a rapid retreat should fortune fail him. At one o'clock on the morning of the 14th Lannes boldly attacked. He was in an extremely dangerous position, having only 10,000 men with whom to face 73,000. But, as Mortier had come up to support him, he set himself the task of holding the enemy at all costs until the arrival of the Emperor.

The Russians, however, found themselves so placed that the worst was bound to overtake them if the whole French army caught them where they were. Having crossed the Aller at Friedland, they were massed together in the bend formed by the river at that spot, and could deploy only if they could succeed in occupying the plain of Heinrichsdorf, which lay in front of them, before the arrival of the French in full force. But Lannes was preventing them from doing this. Grouchy, at the head of a cavalry corps, came up and drove them back. Three times he made a feint of retiring in order to lure the Russian cavalry out on to the plain, and each time they did so they were mown down

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

by Lannes' batteries. This bloody game lasted until midday.

The Emperor, on being informed, hurried up radiant with joy. At last he had the enemy in his grasp ; this would not be another Eylau ! He saw that Bennigsen had his back to the river and could not deploy his forces. If the Russian left was demoralised and Friedland seized, the bridges would be either destroyed or occupied, and the left, under the command of Gortchakoff, thus brought to bay on the banks of a river it could not cross would fall into his hands. Ney was given the preliminary task of breaking through the enemy's left and taking Friedland. On being informed of the task that awaited him, the Marshal was so obviously quivering with joy and excitement and hastened with such impetuosity to place himself at the head of the French right, that the Emperor exclaimed delightedly, " That fellow is a lion ! "

Lannes, together with Mortier, was holding the French left, which was linked up with Ney by the corps lately under Bernadotte but now in command of Victor, of which Dupont's division formed part. The latter enjoyed the Emperor's full confidence, of which it was to show itself pre-eminently worthy.

Bennigsen, seeing that he had the whole French army against him, was meditating breaking off the fight and recrossing the river when Napoleon gave the signal for a general attack. Ney hurled himself against the Russian left with such impetuosity that it gave way for a moment, but it immediately recovered and retaliated by such a vigorous counter-attack that some of the French battalions were temporarily driven back. But Dupont, who was supporting him on the right, came up and saved the situation. Moreover, the Emperor, grouping his artillery on Ney's front, bombarded the enemy's cavalry so heavily that it was decimated and put to flight. The Imperial Russian Guard was then hurled against Dupont, but it was swept aside and driven to the outskirts of Friedland. And Ney entered the little town, where a terrific hand-to-hand struggle took place in the streets. Before long the Russians, brought to a standstill by the river, were hurriedly making for the bridges ; but they had been immediately destroyed by Ney, and the Russians jumped into the water in order to escape.

Meanwhile Napoleon had launched an attack on the Russian

## THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

right. Gortchakoff, on hearing of the capture of Friedland and thinking he was cut off, made up his mind to feel towards the left with the object of recapturing the town and restoring the bridges. But he ran into Ney and Dupont, and another horrible and bloody hand-to-hand fight took place. Gortchakoff, too, was caught between the river and the whole of the French army, and had the greatest difficulty in rejoining Bennigsen, who had managed to get back to the right bank in the utmost disorder. But in addition to losing the battle the Russians had also sacrificed 25,000 men and all their artillery. This was the great and

**A Brilliant Victory.** brilliant victory on which Napoleon had been counting, and it had not cost him so dear as the semi-success of Eylau. The French losses, indeed, amounted to only 7,000 men. The Emperor's circle was wild with exultation. I have before me one of Caulaincourt's letters. He was not, as a rule, given to enthusiastic outbursts, but in reporting the victory to Talleyrand he enumerated the various trophies won with a sort of intoxicated pride and joy. "As for the fallen, there is not one Frenchman to fifteen Russians." And referring to the name of Friedland ("Land of Peace"), he added, with an arrogance rare in him, "This victory will perhaps secure peace when we can do without it."

**SOURCES.** *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XIV, XV. Debrotonne, *Lettres inédites*. Foucart, *La Campagne de Pologne* (Letters and Orders). Murat, *Lettres*, V. Davout, *Correspondance*. Savary, *Mémoires*, V.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Sorel, Madelin (*Fouché*), Herriot, Driault (III), Vandal (*Napoléon et Alexandre*), and Tatischev (*Alexandre et Napoléon*). Grenier, *Étude de la campagne de 1807*. Mansuy, *Jérôme, Napoléon et la Pologne*.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### TILSIT

"Our eagles are planted on the Niemen." The Tsar desires peace; his hopes. Napoleon's attitude; he wishes for an alliance. Each of the two monarchs hopes to win the other over; they are both mistaken regarding the other; the "worthy young man" and the "coxcomb." The raft on the Niemen. The Tilsit conferences. Fall of Sultan Selim; Napoleon considers his position secure on the Turkish side. "Constantinople, never!" A twofold agreement; Alexander undertakes to support France against England; Napoleon half opens the gates of the East for the Tsar. They part duly "satisfied," but mistaken in one another. The "air of Tilsit." The Franco-Russian Alliance; the fly in the ointment. The Tsar has formed an alliance, but not Russia. The Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

"**E**VERYTHING is turning out for the best," wrote Berthier jubilantly to Talleyrand on the 16th, and Duroc, in similar vein, wrote to say, "The Emperor is well." He was, indeed, extremely well and overflowing with good spirits. "You see your prayers have been answered!" he wrote with a somewhat Voltairian smile to the ex-Oratorian Fouché.

"This battle is as decisive as Austerlitz, Marengo and Jena," he had furthermore written to Joseph. And he was right. The war was over. The Russians, beating a hasty retreat towards the Pregel, did not even make a stand at this point of vantage,

Napoleon on the Niemen. but crossed the river with the French hot on their heels. The latter were making by forced marches for the Niemen, "marching ten hours a day," reported Caulaincourt. "Early to-morrow our advance guard will be at Tilsit," the latter wrote to Talleyrand, while on the 19th the Emperor grandiloquently informed Fouché: "Our eagles are planted on the Niemen."

On that day Murat, who was galloping on ahead, saw a Russian envoy approaching under a flag of truce—Bennigsen was pleading for an armistice. Napoleon received the envoys with the utmost graciousness; he was hoping that the Tsar would ask for an

interview and expected it to lead to important results.

Alexander, for his part, was also anxious for a meeting. Friedland had destroyed all his proud hopes at one fell swoop, and Bennigsen himself had written telling him that it was urgent to come to terms "in order to prevent a dangerous pursuit." Russian officers subsequently confessed to Caulaincourt that "Friedland had been a regular massacre for them." Alexander, cured of his conceit in the space of a few hours, was now seized with panic; the Emperor's victory had had the result of filling

Poland with hope and expectation. In Lithuania there were already signs of revolt. If Napoleon made his appearance there, Great Poland would certainly fall into his hands. Thus the Tsar saw his dreams vanish in smoke, and he now declared that he had been deceived, not to say betrayed by England, who had just refused to guarantee a Russian loan. Even the intervention of her fleet along the shores of the Bosphorus now seemed suspect in his eyes, although he had approved of it before. He was no less bitter against Austria, who had lured him on, and even against the King of Prussia, a pitiable ally who had brought him bad luck. When he contemplated all these people he was driven to declaring that Napoleon was the only man whom he could regard as great. "Tell him," he instructed Lobanoff, whom he was on the point of sending back to his illustrious conqueror, "that this suggested union between France and Russia has always been the object of my desire,"—an amiable lie and a mere formality. Through his representative he requested Napoleon for an interview, declaring that he had always been animated by a "friendly regard" for him, to which, no doubt, Friedland had suddenly opened his eyes.

\* \* \* \* \*

How far was he sincere? The question is of some importance for the understanding of all that was to take place between that time and 1812.

Young, elegant, amiable, good-looking and with frank, open features, he was made to please and wished to please. At heart, however, he was capable of a duplicity which on occasion amounted to actual roguery, and as Albert Vandal and after



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him Albert Sorel observed, he was more of a Byzantine Greek than a Moscow Slav. In appearance he was all

### Description of the Tsar.

generosity, nobility and chivalry, a crowned "Liberal"; in reality he was an autocrat eaten

up with pride of power, who had never snatched the knout from the hands of a single Cossack, but had indulged in dreams of "liberty" for others. He would hold out a hand to his enemy, but only when he found he could not conquer him; he would seem to forgive and forget, but would secretly nurse a grievance and keep it alive in his heart. Lavish of honeyed words, he never for one moment forgave any mortification to which he had been exposed; throughout the twists and turns of his policy he always kept his own end in view, and was even more dangerous as an ally than as an opponent, because even when he pretended to be a devoted friend he still remained an adversary at heart.

The defeat at Friedland might well have led him to think that all was lost. And his pride rebelled at the very idea that even an inch of his territory might be trampled underfoot. But his pride also rebelled at the thought that, if he made peace, he would be called upon to make heavy sacrifices to pay for the defeat he had suffered after so much boasting. Though he had been beaten, he did not wish to pay the price. How could he manage it? By exposing that upstart of a Corsican, who would most certainly be flattered, to his famous personal "charm" which he had always been told nothing and nobody could withstand. "France must be led to believe that her interests and those of Russia can be made to coincide," he presently wrote to his mother, one of "Bonaparte's" most stubborn foes. He intended to deceive, and where another would have suffered in silence, he made up his mind to emerge certainly no poorer and possibly richer than he had been when he entered the conflict. It is possible, and even probable that he may have wished to pose as having been seduced by the genius of his adversary and that, beaten at his own game, he may have allowed himself to be charmed by one who was too strong for him, even though he took his revenge later on. But to depict him, as so many historians have done, as rushing to Napoleon simply and solely because his outlook had changed and he had suddenly been fired with enthusiasm for "the Great Man," is to be guilty of a grave mistake.

To what extent was Napoleon, in his turn, destined to be the dupe of this dangerous charmer? This, too, is a question fraught with deep significance for subsequent history.

The Emperor was passionately anxious to secure peace. He had wanted it ever since Austerlitz and again just before Jena.

Napoleon What, then, must have been his eagerness after ten months of absence, during which he had been Desires Peace. endeavouring to carry on this interminable war at the same time as the administration of the Grand Empire! The latter demanded his presence, and he had time and again been consumed with impatience to return to Paris!

Peace, yes! But it must be a noble and certainly a lasting peace, founded upon a loyal and even cordial alliance with one of the Great Powers. Prussia had betrayed the alliance she had made, and stood condemned, and Austria, on the eve of Jena, had refused the friendship offered her. There remained Russia. Although she had been definitely beaten in the most terrific struggles, she had during the last eight months shown proof of military prowess and patriotism which inspired admiration, and which, in the case of a man like Napoleon, quickly developed into sympathy. He dreaded having to beard these people behind the shelter of their "snow mountain," where it would perhaps be impossible to defeat them. He had no wish to deprive them of anything; he would be content to make a semi-independent principality of that part of Poland lately subjected to the yoke of Prussia, and would leave the restoration of the ancient Kingdom of Poland suspended as a menace, which he could cause to materialise or not as he pleased. Talleyrand had hitherto reproached him with wishing to make allies among those whose only contribution to the alliance, since they had previously been despoiled by him, would be a feeling of rancour and bitterness. Very good! He would now try another method and prove that he knew how to conquer without abusing his victory, and thus found an alliance not on compulsion but on generosity. Nay, more, he would offer his vanquished foe, by way of compensation, what he would have won had he been successful; as a preliminary step he would immediately hand over Finland to him and allow him to take it from Sweden, who had been hostile to France ever since 1792; then, sooner or later, he would be given part of

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

the Balkans. Defeated, humiliated and threatened with invasion, the Tsar would suddenly be treated as a friend to whom nothing could be refused. How could he fail to be touched, or refuse to enter into an alliance, which would be lasting, since it would prove advantageous to him for many a long year to come?

The Emperor had determined to make Prussia alone pay for the war. But he would still allow her to live; though even this would be made to appear a concession made to the demands of the Tsar. All the same, if only for the sake of example, he would take away her eastern and western provinces, and would leave only Brandenburg and Prussia proper in the hands of the Hohenzollerns. Thus he would break both wings of the Prussian eagle and at the same time be able to boast to the Tsar of generosity in having allowed the breath to remain in its mutilated body.

But, as usual, his greatest obsession was England. "I made peace at Tilsit," he declared in 1811, "only because Russia undertook to make war on England." As soon as he had issued the Berlin Decree his one thought was to extend its application to the whole of Europe, which sooner or later would have had serious, not to say disastrous, consequences for Albion. If he succeeded in drawing the colossal Russian Empire into this "continental system," the success of his stupendous manœuvre would be overwhelming, and confronted by the alliance of the two great Empires, England would not take long to abandon her attitude of proud and arrogant resistance.

In order to win the Tsar over to his point of view, he too was relying on powers of seduction of a very different nature, the effect of which he had already tried. He was not a "charmer" like his adversary, but his prestige made the slightest sign of friendship on his part extremely flattering. So he made up his mind to be frank and cordial, friendly and gracious. He imagined, quite wrongly, as we know, that the young monarch was "virtuous to the point of stupidity," a man of the world rather than a statesman, eager to win glory without overmuch effort. He thought he was a simple creature, while, as a matter of fact, he was fundamentally two-faced, and he credited him

Napoleon  
Anxious to  
Win over  
the Tsar.

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with candour when he was cunning to the core. The two men never understood each other because they saw what they had previously made up their minds that they wished to see. "He is a worthy young man," observed Napoleon after the first interview, while Alexander's verdict was that his erstwhile foe was a "coxcomb." Their preconceived ideas doomed them to misunderstand each other, but this much at least is certain, that both of them went to the meeting determined to charm the other, Alexander with the object of putting a stop to Napoleon's activities and Napoleon intent on circumventing the Tsar and binding him to himself. Thus Tilsit was destined to be one of the strangest acts in the great Human Comedy.

\* \* \* \* \*

The interview was fixed for the 24th of June and was to take place on a raft in the middle of the river. Just as Napoleon was

**The Raft on the Niemen.** about to enter the boat which was to convey him to his destination, two important messengers arrived. The first informed the Emperor that Austria had counted on the certainty of France meeting with a rebuff if she "tempted the fortune of war," and the second announced that in Constantinople Selim had been overthrown. He added that the Sultan had been murdered, but this was not true. "Apparently the death of the Turk is a blow delivered by England," wrote Caulaincourt. In any case, it set Napoleon free from any obligation towards the Porte, for, so he maintained, he had never been the ally of the Ottoman Empire but only of Selim.

The two monarchs landed simultaneously on the raft and embraced each other effusively. "I hate the English as much as you do," Alexander is supposed to have said. If he did, he told a lie. The reply credited to Napoleon is, "In that case peace is made!"—which would have been a *cri du cœur*. In any case, it is certain that England immediately became the object of an extremely lively discussion, and that profound intimacy seemed to be forthwith established. The effusive outpourings seemed endless. Napoleon, anxious to reach a durable settlement, wished to have long conferences, and Alexander, prepared to make any formal concessions, graciously agreed. This led his adversary to

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conclude that he would be able to lead him by the nose. "He is an extremely handsome and worthy young Emperor," he wrote to Josephine on the evening after the interview. But Alexander, too, had reached his own conclusions; and interpreted the exuberant satisfaction of the Great Man as the expansion of an upstart whose vanity had been flattered by being treated as a friend by the scion of the Romanoffs. "Flatter his vanity," he advised the King of Prussia on the following day. They were both mistaken. Alexander was anything but a "worthy young Emperor" and Napoleon was very far from being a "coxcomb."

After this the conferences took place on the left bank, in the town of Tilsit, which had been made neutral territory. They were

**The  
Conference  
of Tilsit.**

to result in the famous Treaty of Tilsit, the most important event of the reign. The two monarchs used to meet in each other's apartments or else went for long rides together. Meanwhile Talley-

rand, who had again joined the Emperor, was conferring with Kurakin, the Russian Minister. Everybody concerned was an expert at theatrical airs and graces and every smile had its object.

Napoleon thought he had proved to the Tsar that Finland in the hands of Sweden was a constant menace to St. Petersburg. Alexander was only too ready to agree, and it was settled that the Tsar could freely extend his realm by helping himself to this huge province. Napoleon had the art of giving away with the utmost condescension that which was not his to give. During the first few days he seemed inclined to hand over part of the Ottoman Empire to Russia. He had communicated to the Tsar the contents of the dispatches he had received from Constantinople. "I feel that Providence has decreed that the Turkish Empire cannot survive any longer," he added. But he immediately withdrew this statement. "It is by no means decided," he informed Talleyrand. But, at all events, he regarded the partition as having been at least facilitated by this harem revolt, though he wished to leave the matter in abeyance for the time being. The Tsar, intoxicated by the thought, believed a formal promise had been made.

The Emperor, however, had no intention that the Eastern question should be settled forthwith by means of a regular

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partition ; even less did he mean Russia to have Constantinople.

**The  
Question of  
Constantinople.**

One day, when no doubt the Tsar had dared to mention the matter, Napoleon left the interview somewhat agitated. "Constantinople, never! It would make him master of the world!" he exclaimed to Caulaincourt. His expression must have warned Alexander, for the latter did not refer to the matter again. The partition was discussed, but it was merely settled that it would take place only after a further agreement had been reached ; no attempt would be made to carry out the operation until this had been done. As security, the Tsar even undertook to withdraw his troops from the Danubian principalities which they had partially occupied. But Napoleon, confident of remaining master of the situation, now felt he could open up such dazzling vistas to his late adversary that, for the moment, the latter literally had his head turned. The danger was that when he was restored to his senses a year later he would maintain and even believe that he had been duped.

Meanwhile the fate of that unfortunate country, Prussia, was being debated. The Emperor declared that he had decided to obliterate it from the map of the world, and had allowed it to survive only in response to Alexander's entreaties. At least he

**Frederick  
William at  
Tilsit.** wished the Tsar to give him the credit of believing this. Thus the wretched Frederick William had been allowed to come to Tilsit. Kalckreuth had

advised his Sovereign to be "gay and amiable," and Alexander even urged him to "flatter and fawn." His habitual moroseness made him, in any case, extremely ill-fitted to play such a part, but in addition to this he was terrified out of his wits. To complete his panic Napoleon gave him an icy reception, and the Tsar, seeing his ally's melancholy expression, regretted having summoned him. Between the two Emperors, who treated each other with every sign of friendship and affection, the unfortunate King could not help feeling that it was indeed a case of two's company, three's none. He soon learnt that he was to be deprived of all his possessions west of the Elbe, and on the east, of the whole of his substantial slice of Poland. Moreover, he was also to be called upon to surrender certain strongholds, above all Magdeburg, which was the keystone of his State.

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As the Prussian contingent felt that this "simpleton" would never succeed in obtaining any consideration from Napoleon, they resorted to the cruel expedient of sending for Queen Louisa. The unfortunate woman had the simplicity to hope that her beauty, famous throughout Europe, would seduce Napoleon, and also that his vanity would be tickled by seeing his mortal enemy at his feet. She hated him, but now, convinced that she more than

Queen Louisa  
at Tilsit.

anyone else had contributed to the downfall of her country, she consented to turn coquette in order to save some of the wreckage. And bathed

in tears she set out for Tilsit. When Napoleon stepped forward to greet her she threw herself at his feet. He courteously raised

her from the ground, revolted at heart by the humiliation to which, without his having demanded it, this woman had been reduced by her advisers. But that very night he ridiculed the

pathetic attitude she had adopted. "She was like Chimène begging for justice," he declared. "But it's water sliding off a

duck's back, as far as I'm concerned," he said when he wrote to Josephine describing the interview. "I can't be bothered to

dally with her." A few days later the Queen heard the sentence that had been passed against her country. The Prussian territory

between the Rhine and the Elbe was to form a Kingdom of Westphalia destined for Jerome; Posen and Poland as far as the

Vistula were to be turned into a Grand Duchy for the benefit of the Elector of Saxony, who was also to be made King of Danzig.

That city was to be taken from the King of Prussia and become a Free City. The unfortunate Kingdom of Prussia, thus reduced

by two-thirds, was to pay a large war indemnity, and until the sum was paid its strongholds were to be occupied. "A master-

piece of destruction," wrote the infuriated Pozzo di Borgo. Moreover, thus mutilated and bound, Prussia was to be linked

up with the system of the Grand Empire as an "ally," and would consequently have to shut her ports to English trade. Queen

Louisa made one last effort; seated by the Emperor at table she offered him a rose she was wearing "in exchange for Magde-

burg." Clumsy simplicity could not well have gone further. Napoleon smiled, accepted the rose, and kept Magdeburg. She left Tilsit, her heart

bleeding, and was not to survive the ordeal two years. People

Death of  
Queen Louisa.

## TILSIT

said it was her country's misfortunes that caused her death, but that terrible sojourn in Tilsit, where she had been forced through her nobility of soul to degrade herself, may have been a contributory factor.

The "generous" Alexander had not been slow to condemn all this. But Napoleon had silenced "the scruples" of the young Tsar, declaring that it was only out of consideration for him that he had allowed the Hohenzollerns, who had been guilty of felony, to keep their Throne and their Crown. The Romanoff considered that he was gaining so much by the treaty that, in spite of his "tender feeling," he soon forgot the ignominy to which his "bosom friends" in Berlin had been exposed.

As far as Napoleon was concerned, the most important part of the Treaty of Tilsit lay in the clause which provided for twofold mediation on the part of France and Russia. The Tsar was to undertake the part of mediator between France and England, but if London refused to allow him to act in this capacity, he was to declare war and become a party to the Blockade. Napoleon, on the other hand, was to offer Constantinople to act as mediator between Turkey and Russia, it being understood that if Turkey failed to agree, the Emperor of the French would make common cause with the Tsar "for the purpose of snatching the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire, *with the exception of Constantinople*, from the clutches of the Sultan and Turkish barbarism." Napoleon, who was determined not to press the Turks too hard, hoped, on the other hand, that the Tsar would make energetic representations to London. He expected his efforts to fail, but this would provide an opening for that war to the death on the part of the whole Continent against British trade which would result in the ruin or the capitulation of "Albion."

The treaty having been formally concluded on the 9th of July, the two Sovereigns bade each other farewell with solemnly reiterated promises to meet again. They parted, moreover, both sincerely satisfied; each believing that he had hoodwinked the other, they had, in any case, realised the objects they had had in mind before the interview. The vanquished Tsar was convinced that it was his personal charm alone that had prevented the victor from forcing him to pay for his defeat; he had warded off the restoration of

The Treaty  
Concluded.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

Poland and had been given permission to annex Finland ; more important still, he imagined that the most alluring prospects had been opened up for him in the East. Napoleon, too, felt that he had fully accomplished all he had intended. Although he had postponed the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland—as a matter of fact, this was a point on which he had never really made up his mind—the creation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw would always allow the menace of it to hang over the head of his new ally ; for the time being, that was enough. He was also pleased that, at his suggestion, the Tsar should invade Finland ; this war with Sweden would keep that “ madman ” King Gustavus busy and at the same time would occupy the Russian forces for longer than the Tsar imagined. Far better that they should wear themselves out there than on the Danube ! Even the Balkans, which he seemed to have generously sacrificed to the Tsar’s highest hopes, were only opened up to him hypothetically and were for the time being closed against him. But the most valuable result of the treaty for Napoleon lay not in any particular clause, but in the fact that an alliance had been concluded which, he fondly hoped, would reduce all his enemies, whether open or secret, to impotence. Thus they both parted extremely pleased with themselves.

\* \* \* \* \*

They were deceiving themselves, however, and this involved extremely dangerous consequences. In his heart of hearts, and perhaps quite unconsciously, the Tsar harboured a feeling of bitter resentment. Proud of his birth and rank, this Romanoff had been obliged to appear attentive and even amenable to this “ upstart.” The situation had always made him feel vaguely uncomfortable, and at times he was even fully conscious of a sense of humiliation.

**The Tsar’s  
Bitterness.**

“Fancy me spending my days with Bonaparte, being with him for whole hours at a time !” he wrote to his sister from Tilsit ; and the latter, reading between the lines, replied that her brother would have to bring back “ substantial gains ” to St. Petersburg, adding that otherwise “ we shall have only the shame of having fraternised with a man against whom we have, quite rightly, declaimed so loudly ! ” Alexander often felt secretly ashamed, and unfortunately the feeling, though carefully hidden, became stronger

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instead of weaker in the course of the five years for which—on paper—the alliance he had concluded lasted. Thus the alliance became a menace rather than a help to Napoleon, for such feeling predisposed Alexander to take offence at anything which he regarded as a breach of the "agreements" for which his pride had paid so dearly at Tilsit. His delight at finding Napoleon himself suggesting the possibility of a partition of the Ottoman Empire led him so grossly to exaggerate the promises the latter had made on the subject that when the picture he had conjured up before his eyes seemed to fade ever so slightly through the action of his colleague, he regarded himself as having been deceived, duped and fooled to a far greater extent than he actually had been.

Napoleon, for his part, had carried away with him the vision of an amiable young man who, though impressionable, was simple and sincere, easily won over by friendly words and a sentimental attitude, that "Tilsit jargon" as Albert Sorel describes it, which until Erfurt and even afterwards he constantly endeavoured to revive. And, bearing away this false impression, he utterly failed to understand Alexander's game. He had talked to him about the East with that astounding freedom familiar to all those who had to deal with him and which the Great Man occasionally used as a vent for his feelings. But although the Tsar interpreted what he said as providing him with grounds for hope, Napoleon himself attached no importance to it whatever. Conversations did not count; only the clauses of the treaty counted.

### The "Air of Tilsit."

And when later on the Tsar referred to the suggestions made to "the air of Tilsit," he replied, "I know only the air that has been put to paper, the letter of the treaty." It was impossible, however, for an alliance founded on such misunderstandings to be as sure and lasting as Napoleon regarded it in 1807 and for long afterwards. And relying on it as he had perhaps never before relied on any of his manœuvres, he necessarily fell a prey to a number of mistakes, errors and miscalculations.

Furthermore, even if Alexander had gone away completely and sincerely won over, the alliance would still have been far from satisfactory; for from St. Petersburg to Moscow, and from every member of the Royal Family to the lowest moujik, the

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whole of Russia remained fundamentally and at times even fanatically hostile to France. Caulaincourt, who **Russia Still Hostile to France.** was shortly afterwards sent to St. Petersburg, and was destined to be so frequently mistaken, especially regarding the character of the Tsar, never once misjudged the feeling of the people; and he was particularly clear-sighted when he wrote saying that for the Russians of 1807 to regard the French as friends would have amounted to "a change of religion." The Tsar himself was helpless in this respect; any real effort to impose the system of Tilsit upon his people, his Court and even his family would have exposed him to the tragic fate with which so many of his predecessors had met, and this consideration made him but little disposed to remain for long amenable to "Bonaparte," whose very friendship, moreover, he felt to be an affront. This made him at once a sensitive and an exacting ally.

Napoleon tried to ignore all this. He regarded the Tsar as sincere and furthermore believed that the threat of restoring the Kingdom of Poland, which he could carry out at any moment, and the promise regarding the partition of the Ottoman Empire, which he could modify, gave him a hold over him. It was these considerations that enabled him to set out for Paris on the 10th of July in the best of spirits. Later on, in St. Helena, when he was asked by his companions what was the happiest time of his life, he replied, "I think perhaps it was at Tilsit!"

**SOURCES.** *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XV. *Correspondance d'Alexandre avec la Grande-Duchesse Catherine*, published by the Grand-Duke Nicholas. Murat, *Lettres*, V. *Memoirs or Reminiscences* by Caulaincourt, Thiébauld (IX), and Savary.

**WORKS.** Those already mentioned by Vandal (*Alexandre et Napoléon*, I). Tatitschef (*Alexandre et Napoléon*, I), Sorel (VII), Driault (III). Rain, *L'Empereur Alexandre*, I. The Grand-Duke Nicholas, *L'Empereur Alexandre*, I.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE SYSTEM AT ITS HEIGHT

Exultation in Paris. The Emperor seems more of a despot. Fouché, having quashed the last uprisings in the West, fears reaction. Napoleon, though not in favour of it, encourages the support of the elements of the Right; Fouché opposes him. The last signs of opposition; Chateaubriand; Madame de Staël. Changes in the Ministry; Talleyrand becomes a high dignitary, but is deprived of his portfolio. The new Ministers inferior to their predecessors. Abolition of the Tribunate. Creation of an imperial aristocracy. Magnificent public works. The system at the height of its glory.

**T**HE Emperor returned to Saint Cloud on the 27th of July. The official world was awaiting his arrival with some anxiety. The incidents which had followed Eylau were not sufficiently far removed to enable them to hope that the Master was not still suffering from the effects of that irritation which his letters had frequently betrayed. Doubtless the news of Friedland, and even more the gratifying reports about Tilsit, had given rise to an enthusiasm which would go far towards obliterating the offensive uncertainty displayed by public opinion even after Jena. "At last we have the peace we have longed for!" wrote one fair Parisian. "And it's not a bad one either. . . . It is almost impossible to believe all that has happened during the last ten months, and one can never grow tired of admiring the Emperor's genius!" This expressed the general feeling, which was shared by the Bourse. After Jena Government stocks had risen to 73, but after Tilsit they rose to 93·40 francs. Remembering the return from Austerlitz, however, a certain uneasiness reigned among the high officials, including Cambacérès, whom circumstances, time and again, somewhat rudely forced to be firm. As a matter of fact, the public bodies vied with each other in adulation. Was it not the First President of the *Cour de Paris*—a Séguier!—who exclaimed: "Napoleon stands above human history; he belongs

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to the heroic age ; he is beyond admiration. It is love alone that can reach him ! ” None the less, it was in the extremely harassed frame of mind described by Madame de Rémusat that the heads of the Government presented themselves at Saint Cloud on the 27th to welcome the Emperor.

They were agreeably surprised. The Emperor was radiant and declared himself pleased to find that “ the administration had not failed in any way during his long absence.” The joy with which recent events had filled him illumined his whole countenance.

As a matter of fact, it was not long before he began to inspire anxiety in the minds of all by an obvious exaltation of his already

terrifying personality. “ He seems to imagine he has reached the point when any moderation is merely a futile hindrance,” wrote Metternich shortly afterwards. The “ despot ” in him was

**The Emperor  
Becomes more  
Despotic.**

becoming more pronounced. At all events he seemed eager to pick up the reins of civil government once more. “ I have had enough of the General’s trade,” he declared to his Ministers ; “ I am going to return to the trade of Prime Minister and begin holding grand business reviews, which it is high time should take the place of grand military reviews.” And from that moment he began to make investigations, to glean information, and to cast his formidable eyes over everything, from politics to economics.

Fouché was the first to be questioned. He was still a source of anxiety as well as of satisfaction to the Master. That “ devil of

a man,” as Napoleon called him, was becoming every day more and more the centre of the most complicated intrigues. But whenever he looked

**Fouché  
Questioned.**

like finding himself in a compromising position he had no difficulty in proving that he had become implicated only the better to serve the Government, an assertion which, as it happened, was frequently true. The Emperor had, above all, been displeased by his relations with the Senate, which, he had been informed, had done more than anything else to raise a clamour for peace after Jena. Napoleon had nursed a grudge against him for this ; but Fouché, far from excusing himself, had declared that his attitude had been entirely dictated by his desire to serve the Master. He even had the effrontery to write and tell Napoleon that “ he was either loved

## THE SYSTEM AT ITS HEIGHT

or hated by every class according to whether his sword was in or out of its scabbard."

Moreover, during the last ten months, the Minister had been doing work, above all in connection with "machinations in the West," which would have been quite sufficient to restore him to favour. Disaffection was still smouldering there, and from Brittany to Normandy the Chouans were carrying on secret intrigues which, since war abroad encouraged conspiracies at home, might, in the event of a sudden crisis, prove dangerous.

**Fouché  
Pacifies the  
West.**

No sooner had Napoleon set out for Saxony in the autumn of 1806 than a young Royalist agent, Le Chevalier, had slipped into Paris with the object of attempting, like Cadoudal's friends three years previously, to bring about a union between the two opposing parties (the Royalist and the Jacobin). Having met with failure, he had returned to Normandy to join another of the last few remaining Chouans, the Comte d'Aché, with whose help he had endeavoured to organise a complicated conspiracy which, in the hope of a possible invasion on the part of England, would have prepared the ground for an insurrection. Brittany had also been worked. The rebel Prigent, one of the most daring Chouans, who was employed by "the Anglo-Royalist Agency of Jersey," at that time under the direction of the Comte de Puisaye, the ex-leader of the Norman insurrection of 1793, had landed in April, 1807, and together with another formidable Chouan, Lahaie Saint-Hilaire, had hoped to profit by the agitation prevalent after Eylau in order to foment an upheaval. In Brittany and in Anjou armed bands had once more made their appearance, forerunners of an insurrection that might be linked up with the one that was being prepared in Normandy.

Now Fouché, having quickly picked up the threads of the two conspiracies, had set to work to arrest the conspirators. On the 20th of July, a few days before the Emperor's return, he seized young Le Chevalier and the whole of the Normandy "band," with the exception of d'Aché, who, subsequently hunted down, was destined to meet a tragic fate. Meanwhile, Lahaie Saint-Hilaire, who had managed to escape his pursuers ever since Georges' conspiracy, was arrested in Brittany and shot, while Prigent, hard pressed, succeeded only with the greatest difficulty

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in escaping to Jersey. Between the summer of 1807 and that of 1808 the Minister of Police put the coping-stone to his work by the rounding-up and capture of Prigent, who meanwhile had returned. His arrest in June, 1808, marked the end of this final outburst of chouanerie and filled the Emperor with delight which he made no effort to conceal.

These incidents, carefully and prudently hidden from the nation at large, had restored Fouché's credit with the Master, a fact which public opinion, kept in ignorance, found it extremely difficult to understand. And he exploited his return to favour by endeavouring to prevail upon Napoleon to adopt the policy which, ex-Conventional and regicide that he was, he had never ceased to pursue and which engrossed him even more than the hunting down of Royalist agitators.

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The reactionary movement which he had always dreaded seemed to be developing, and he did his utmost to snatch the Emperor from the clutches of the "enemies of the Revolution." The elements of the Right were hastening to the support of the system in ever greater numbers. As a matter of fact each victory won by the Emperor meant the adhesion of small groups which before had been wavering. And these members of the *Ancien Régime* were accepting and even soliciting places which men like Mathieu Molé had only a short while previously refused. They were to be seen insinuating themselves into every department of the administration; and Fouché had been informed that the erstwhile Comte de Carné, on being appointed Prefect of Indre-et-Loire, had been welcomed by the Royalists in the department as "the man whose

**Fouché Fears Reaction.**

mother had been one of the victims of the Revolution." True, the Emperor did not regard the matter in that light. He was merely continuing to carry out the policy of fusion I have already described, reserving in his mind's eye the majority of appointments and the most important part for the "third estate," which, it will be remembered, he had made the foundation of his system. On the 4th of April, 1807, in a letter to Louis he said that he had about him a good many *émigrés*, but that he "would not allow them

**The Emperor Supported by the Right.**

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to be top dogs . . . because he was ruling in accordance with a system and was not being constrained by weakness." And shortly afterwards he wrote to Jerome telling him to follow his example and "keep the Third Estate in the majority in all the posts to be filled." He also strenuously denied that he entertained any idea of reaction. And although he did not hesitate to write to Fouché, the ex-proconsul of the Terror, that "the hideous traces of the groups of 1793" must be obliterated, only a few weeks previously he had written telling him to prevent any attempts at reaction; and when Ricord, a Jacobin ex-Conventional, was apparently being worried by one of the Prefects on account of his past, he wrote saying that events that were long since past and gone were not to be dug up—at which Fouché must have been highly delighted.

Nevertheless, he did not altogether trust the Emperor's principles, sound though he believed them to be. *He was still afraid* of the pressure of public opinion, which he thought might overwhelm Napoleon and sweep him along further than he would have gone of his own accord. The new landowners were complaining that they were being menaced by the friends of the old nobility whose property they had bought; the priests were refusing to give the Sacrament to them, as well as to the former constitutional priests, who had become members of the lay community and had married. Some of the old nobility were regaining their influence and making their weight felt in the Electoral Colleges. Fouché reported all these incidents with an anxiety which he deliberately exaggerated. He also reported the activities of the Jesuits who, he maintained, were slipping into France in the guise of "Fathers of the Faith," and he begged the Emperor not to allow them to enter the teaching profession, into which Monsieur de Fontanes would gladly have welcomed them. Fontanes was his bugbear. I may mention that he had been made head of the new University of France and was urging the ex-Vicomte de Bonald, the great advocate of Divine Right, to accept a seat in the upper Council. Bonald was an ardent Catholic and in the end accepted the post because he regarded Bonaparte as the "worker" appointed by God to restore all that had been destroyed. With such men in power, declared Fouché,



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the system, originally founded, not on the ruins but on the institutions of the Revolution, would soon lose its original character.

Napoleon was delighted to find that Fouché was paralysing the Royalist Party. He was upset by the opposition of the Faubourg Saint Germain—quite unreasonably so ; and if he could not win

them over he hoped to be able to attract their descendants to him. As a matter of fact, after Tilsit the “ Faubourg ” had been utterly routed.

Even Louis de Narbonne was rallying to the support of the Empire ! And the mansion of the Duc de Luynes, who had been made an imperial senator, had become a Napoleonic stronghold in the very heart of the enemy's territory. The Duke had forced his daughter-in-law, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, to accept a post at the Tuileries and the Emperor had regarded this as an important victory. But Fouché was far from pleased by triumphs of this description. To paralyse the Royalists and reduce them to inactivity was all very well ; but to install them in office was extremely dangerous. And yet the Master persisted in bringing them to their knees, and soon, if the Faubourg did not actually rally to the Emperor, it at least kept silence. But it was imperative for opposition in any shape or form to be quashed.

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Napoleon was still troubled by opposition from two quarters—there was the group of which Chateaubriand was the centre, and that which owed allegiance to Germaine de Staël. In the salons Chateaubriand was holding his head in the air and declaring that nothing would make him lower it. The mad adulation of which he was the object on the part of the grand ladies puffed up his pride, and he flattered himself on being the last of the Romans. Fouché thought at one time that he had won him over, but he was mistaken. On the 4th of July, 1807, at the very moment when the Emperor was discussing the partition of the world with the Tsar, there appeared in the columns of the *Mercure* Chateaubriand's famous article which was destined, later on, to bring him so much kudos and even profit. “ In vain does Nero prosper ! Tacitus has already been

## THE SYSTEM AT ITS HEIGHT

born in the Empire . . . and already a just Providence has delivered into the hands of a lowly child the glory of the Master of the World ! ” The article had a “ *succès de scandale* ” ; but overjoyed by Tilsit, the Emperor did not appear to trouble much about it. Moreover, when, as First Consul, he had been engaged in the task of restoring the country, he had felt a good deal of sympathy with the author of the *Génie du Christianisme*, and much of this feeling still survived in his breast now that he was a ruling Sovereign fast veering towards despotism. Furthermore, he did not think Chateaubriand capable of making himself the centre of a party or even of conducting an intrigue. The *Mercure* was merely told that it must do without contributions from this inflammable individual; and, as a matter of fact, when, shortly afterwards Chateaubriand published his *Martyrs*, he deleted from the manuscript everything which might have been interpreted as being derogatory to the Master. The latter had insisted that the famous article on Tacitus and Nero should continue to be regarded as an attack of no importance. This moderation, inspired by an admiration which lasted until the very end, as well as by a certain contempt for a thinker who did not put precept into practice, clearly proves that it was a cabal alone that was odious in the eyes of the Emperor, since it might lead to the revival of party spirit in France, and that in prosecuting Germaine de Staël and her coterie, the cabal of which she was the centre was the sole object of his disapproval.

We have already described how, ever since the Consulate, she had behaved in a manner calculated to incur his displeasure, although at first his attitude towards her had been one of indifference. He might perhaps have forgotten the intrigues she had carried on in 1800 with the object of organising opposition against him in the Tribune when it was first established, but he had found it impossible to forgive the anti-French attitude which her exasperated hatred of the despot had inspired in Necker's daughter in connection with the Peace of Amiens. Moreover, though she was neither Royalist nor Republican, she yet managed to make herself the centre of opposition of every description, which she fostered and fed. “ I do not wish to have Madame de Staël in Paris and I have very good reasons for not wishing it,” Napoleon

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afterwards wrote to Metternich. "If Madame de Staël wished or knew how to be a Royalist or a Republican, I should have nothing against her; but she is a busybody who stirs up the salons. Such a woman is to be feared only in France and I will have none of her."

Although she had already been warned, she had most imprudently expressed her delight over the "defeat" of Eylau, after having openly bewailed the French victory at Jena. One of her letters which fell into the Emperor's hands was full of sympathy for Prussia and enlightened him about her. "This letter will show you what a good Frenchwoman she is," he wrote to Fouché. And a few days later he returned to the subject, declaring she was "the enemy of the Government and even of France on whom she was dependent." And indeed Germaine's whole circle was impregnated with that anti-national spirit which the Master hated and of which Benjamin Constant's exclamation, "How much better the Germans are than us!" was characteristic. Napoleon was astonished to find Fouché humouring this woman and her male companion. After the crisis of Eylau he gave vent to his indignation. "That woman is a regular crow. She believed the storm had already burst. . . . Let her get back to her Swiss lake. Haven't these Genevese done us enough harm?" He sent her orders to return to her house at Coppet. It was not a very terrible sentence, and when the young Auguste de Staël came to the Emperor to intercede on his mother's behalf, Napoleon explained his attitude towards this dangerous woman to him without undue harshness but also without any sign of weakness. Determined through her to attack a whole coterie, he also included Juliette Récamier in her downfall. When Madame de Staël's salon had been dispersed, Madame Récamier had made herself the centre of that opposition which was so hateful to him because it was so deep-dyed in internationalism. And an order was given for Madame Récamier "not to come within a hundred miles of Paris." She joined Germaine at Coppet, which was kept under close supervision. One day Madame Récamier complained that such a great man should have lowered himself to strike at women. But he did not strike women; through them he merely struck out against the spirit which they kept alive and which, on account of its anti-national and disintegrating nature, he regarded as being

## THE SYSTEM AT ITS HEIGHT

worse than the opposition of Royalists or Republicans. The latter were at least inspired by definite principles and respectable attachments.

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The Emperor was all the more determined to level a blow at the hostile salons because their intrigues had penetrated even the official world and had undermined the loyalty of its members. And just at this juncture there was a crisis in this sphere which was destined to have grave consequences and which took the form, somewhat rare in the annals of the Empire, of a ministerial upheaval.

It took its rise in the unconscionably overweening pretensions of Talleyrand, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

For some time past Talleyrand had undoubtedly been the most highly esteemed member of the Government. Certain letters written to the Minister during the critical months of the spring of 1807, and which are now in my hands, have proved to me more than anything else the incredible prestige he enjoyed among most

Talleyrand's of the members of the imperial circle, both civilians  
Pretensions. and soldiers. Moreover, the Emperor himself,

whether because being forewarned he was fore-armed, or because he sincerely admired his ability, had, just after the campaign, given him proof of the most cordial confidence, which the tact and affability of this shrewd courtier had merely served to strengthen. All this had resulted in inflaming his already insatiable ambition, backed by his still unsatisfied greed. Though he was a Minister who had been raised both by the suffrages of the public and by the Master himself far above the rest, having again been paid millions of money, not to mention having been given the extremely lucrative principality of Benevento, he still felt he had not received as much as he deserved. Moreover, ever since 1804, he had been nursing a secret grievance.

As he had not been made one of the high dignitaries appointed at that time, he had been hankering, as one fair observer puts it, also to be "made an Arch." And he begged the Emperor, on his return from Tilsit, to make good this "mortifying" omission.

Napoleon was annoyed at the request. He had made up his mind that none of his Ministers was to be made a high dignitary

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during his term of office, as such a step would have raised him above his colleagues. And now Talleyrand considered he had a right to keep his portfolio after being given the honour he coveted. As a matter of fact, these posts had already been filled. Joseph and Louis had not been deprived of theirs when they had been made Kings, the former still being Grand Elector and the latter

Constable. But their absence from the country had necessitated the creation of a Vice-Grand Elector and a Vice-Constable. It was the former honour, that of Vice-Grand Elector, which was

He is made  
Vice-Grand  
Elector.

conferred upon Talleyrand in response to his insistence—"the only vice he lacked," sneered the virtuous Fouché. For the sake of consistency Major-General Berthier, who had been Minister of War ever since the Consulate, was made Vice-Constable. But Napoleon, true to his principle, made them pay for the privilege by depriving them both of their portfolios.

In his heart of hearts Talleyrand was furious with the Master for not waiving in his favour a rule which, after all, he had made himself. In vain did the Emperor confer upon him the additional honour of making him Grand Chamberlain, which meant that his combined salaries amounted to half a million. Regarding himself as the victim of the operation he had himself demanded, and feeling that he had been "dismissed" from office, he did not take long to make himself the centre of the discontent which at this juncture was disturbing the official world from time to time. Such a state of affairs would, in any case, have been extremely prejudicial to the Government, and the Emperor, who was to hear of it only later on, increased its perils. Unable to reconcile himself to allowing capacity to remain unused, he still summoned this secret enemy semi-officially to his council board, and even employed him on certain important missions which, as Albert Sorel puts it, provided him "with opportunities for proving his disloyalty." Talleyrand's great intrigue, which, as we shall see, was one day to have the gravest results, took its roots in this so-called "dismissal" of 1807, and was merely brought to a head when, owing to the partial discovery of his treacherous actions, the "dismissal" became an almost cruel actuality.

Be this as it may, the "elevation" of Talleyrand and Berthier left two offices vacant, while by the death of Portalis the

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Emperor had yet a third to fill. The loss of Portalis was most unfortunate. In the extremely difficult position of Minister of Public Worship he had displayed rare capacity and dexterity combined with true devotion to the interests of the *régime*, and he disappeared just at the moment when the rupture with the Holy See was bound to affect the relations between Church and State.

The worst of it was that in losing the help of three Ministers, each one of whom had been extraordinarily competent in his particular sphere, the Emperor felt but little inclined to seek for men of similar stamp to succeed them, even if they were to be found. Although he may not yet have wished, as he did three years later, to employ only blind and fanatical supporters, he was already inclining towards surrounding himself by superior Civil Servants, men who, being more or less nonentities, would not encourage opposition even of a useful nature.

Champagny, hitherto Minister of the Interior, was placed in charge of Foreign Affairs. He was a man whom the Emperor

The New Ministers. inspired with fear rather than love. Clarke, a military bureaucrat whom his comrades afterwards called the "Maréchal d'Encre," a brave soldier on the field of battle, but utterly lacking in character, initiative and strength of will, was made Minister of War. Bigot de Préameneu was made Minister of Public Worship. He was a learned lawyer, but a whole-hearted though somewhat terrified admirer of the Emperor. None of this trio could lay claim to the title of "statesman," which, as we know, the Emperor regretted never being able to grant to any of his Ministers. Crétet, who took Champagny's place at the Ministry of the Interior, was, like the other three, an extremely hard worker, so much so, indeed, that he wore himself out in two years and died in harness; but his worth, though real, was merely that of a useful collaborator.

The result of this crisis was that only one Minister remained who could boast of a superiority which stood out all the more conspicuous for the slight lowering in the standard of ability of his colleagues. This was Fouché, the only man who was credited with being able on occasion to oppose the Master or warn him against grave mistakes.

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As a matter of fact, he had no intention of systematically opposing him. Having paralysed and almost annihilated the parties hostile to the *régime*, he remained until further orders devoted to this *régime*, his one aim being to defend its original principles against reaction. But with the autocratic temper of an old Jacobin and extremely hostile to anything calculated to harass the Government, whether inspired by the Press or the rostrum, he was, in this respect, in perfect agreement with the ideas of the Master. Moreover, he did not seem to be in any way opposed to the steady growth of despotism inside the country, with the result that Napoleon could rely on not meeting with the slightest resistance in his Council to the high-handed policy which for the last six years had been becoming ever more pronounced, and which, after Tilsit, ultimately prevailed and occasionally exceeded due limits.

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The first victim of this growing spirit of despotism was the  
Tribunate. For the last six years this body had suffered in the eyes of the nation quite as much as in Napoleon's from the blind opposition which an unruly minority had shown to the institutions of the Consulate. Purged in the year X and reduced to debating  
in camera, it had effaced itself in vain. The Emperor, having made up his mind to abolish it, and certain of the support of public opinion, did not hesitate to revive the memory of compromising incidents in the past in order to strike it down. A report was published in the *Moniteur* condemning an Assembly in which (though there had been no signs of it since 1802) "something of that restless and democratic spirit which had so long been agitating France" still survived. The result was that on the  
19th of August, 1807, the Tribunate was abolished  
by a mere decree and the majority of its members  
were transferred to the Legislative Body. This Assembly, whose activities the Emperor was aiming at restricting so drastically that, to use his own expression, it would become merely a Legislative Council, also in its turn began to sink into insignificance. The elections of which, though somewhat indirectly, it was the result, according to one of the Prefects still further curtailed the scanty measure of representative government

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already in existence. And certainly the Senate was the last body that could possibly have restored the prestige of the Assemblies. All opposition in it seemed to be completely dead and when, in due course, this Assembly, filled with old revolutionaries, was called upon to sanction the institution of entail, one of the most anti-egalitarian measures possible, among all the old revolutionaries who filled the hall only one voice, that of Grégoire, was raised to condemn the Bill.

The establishment of entail was the result of the creation of a new nobility, which marked a further development of the *régime*. The measure seemed to the Emperor to be in keeping with the "monarchical system," and he had been meditating introducing it ever since 1804. But at that time it would only have put up the backs even of the majority of those who were to benefit by it in 1807. I have already pointed out that the country, indifferent to its lost liberty, was still jealous of the equality that had been won, and that this feeling had been strong enough to give rise to the liveliest opposition even to the creation of the Legion of Honour under the Consulate, on the ground that it was "not in keeping with the principle of equality." The Emperor's aim, or at all events his professed aim, was based upon the same idea as that of the Legion of Honour. "Only that is irrevocably destroyed which has been replaced," he would have said in 1807 just as he had said in 1802. If a new Throne had been created, the reason advanced for the step had been the determination to destroy all hope of seeing the restoration of the Throne of the Bourbons. The same argument applied to the old nobility. Privileges had been abolished and, in the Emperor's eyes, quite rightly. But the nation, he observed, had been deprived of a framework. As soon as a new nobility had been created, however, the old nobility which, in spite of all, still maintained its prestige in the eyes of the very peasantry whom it had inspired with such loathing, would be stripped of its last shred of privilege, albeit a moral one, that of possessing the title of nobility. "The execution of this system," wrote Napoleon to Cambacérès, "is the only means of entirely uprooting the old nobility." . . . What possible objection can there be, from the point of view of public order, to the creation of a new currency which shall be the reward of merit



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and services rendered, and will shed brilliance on the choice of the people ? ”

Nevertheless, he foresaw an outburst of democratic indignation, if not among the old revolutionaries in his service, at all events among the masses. But he was determined to forestall this, and on the 31st of May, 1807, when he received Lefebvre after the

capitulation of Danzig, he informed him that he was creating him Duke of Danzig ; and on the 11th of June he granted him the title by letters

patent. He wished that the first Frenchman to be thus enrolled in the patrician order should be perhaps the most plebeian of the great leaders, an old member of the Garde Française whose manners and way of life, not to mention his marriage with the coarse Catherine Hübscher, who had been a laundress, made him one of the most typical creations of the Revolution. As soon as Lefebvre had been provided for, titles began to pour down. But the situation had to be regularised. And the decree of the 1st of March, 1808, was destined to establish a titular hierarchy—from princes, dukes, and counts, down to barons and chevaliers.

This nobility was not to be automatically but only conditionally hereditary. Those who were thus honoured were authorised to entail the title on the eldest son of the family ; it was thus hereditary and passed on from father to son. Thus the new nobility was created. Between 1807 and 1814 it consisted of 31 Dukes, 452 Counts, 1,500 Barons and 1,474 Chevaliers.

The scenes to which the first promotions gave rise occasionally inspired ridicule on the part of contemporaries of the recipients, first and foremost among them the Duchesse d'Abrantès ; in fact, some of the anecdotes about them still raise a smile. Some feigned contempt. The scholar Volney, who remained an “ old Republican,” put the following postscript to the first letter he wrote after receiving his title : “ Not yet quite accustomed to hearing myself addressed as Monsieur le Comte.” Several members of the old nobility had their titles restored ; former Counts, once more created Counts, were epigrammatically dubbed “ *Comtes refaits* ” in Royalist salons. There was a regular avalanche of jeers and jibes. But Napoleon was expecting it. The Prefect of Police denounced the epigrams circulated by the old nobility, adding that before long those who had been most

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indignant against the new creations would be soliciting the honours they had once so cruelly derided. Napoleon himself declared that before ten years had passed all this would be taken for granted, and that before thirty had elapsed not only would the old and new nobility get on extremely well together, but would intermarry, an aim which he set to work to achieve as early as 1807.

His system of fusion would only have benefited thereby. At all events he was of opinion that "the strongest barrier that could be raised against the restoration of the Bourbons as well as that of the Republic was the firm installation of this sound aristocracy which was sincerely interested in the maintenance of the new dynasty." In this, as we shall see, he was most woefully mistaken.

The people, hitherto perfectly ready to approve all the Emperor's decisions, were perturbed by this innovation, which stank of the *Ancien Régime*. This was above all true of the Army. Had the "Revolution for the establishment of Equality" really been made only for the purpose of once more creating a whole host of titled persons? Had all those brave volunteers set out for the Rhine merely to have Savary made Duc de Rovigo and Maret Duc de Bassano? Nevertheless, in 1807, neither the masses nor the Army were disposed to make much of a grievance out of anything done by the man whose still unshaken popularity continued to raise him to such lofty heights. To surround himself by newly created nobles was one of the "Little Caporal's" whims, which might well be overlooked in view of the benefits he never ceased to confer upon the country.

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And, indeed, the Emperor was profiting by the restoration of peace to push forward the public works that had already been begun. While the finishing touches were being put to roads, canals and ports (Napoleon spent nine millions in a single year on these objects) Paris was every day developing more and more into a gigantic workshop employing three thousand workmen.

**Magnificent  
Public Works.**

The foundations of the *Temple de la Victoire*, which was presently to spring out of the ground, and face the *Palais Législatif* on the other side of the Place de la Concorde, were being laid. The Blockade had given a fresh impetus to industry and agriculture, and Napoleon

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took care to reassure the commercial world, where trade was languishing, by holding out hopes of a speedy peace with England which would open up fresh markets. "It is better to postpone it," he declared before the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce, "so as to make sure that it is lasting." The *Report* of 1807 was once again a prolonged shout of triumph re-echoed by the acclamations of the whole country. When, shortly afterwards, the Emperor was on his way to Bayonne, the "population of the whole countryside between Paris and the Pyrenees lined the route." "They were mad, intoxicated with enthusiasm," added this eyewitness. And when, a few weeks later, Napoleon appeared in La Vendée, the people, who but a little while back had been so hostile to the Revolution, made every moment of his visit a triumph. The great mistakes had not yet been made ; everything was order, success, glory ; and yet France was on the eve of what was sooner or later to bring about disorder, defeat and ruin !

SOURCES. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XV, XVI. Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon*, I. Madame de Rémusat, *Lettres*, III. Girardin, *Journal*, I. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Madame de Rémusat, Savary (III), Pontécoulant (III), Roederer, Thiébault (IV), La Rochefoucauld-Doudeauville, Broglie (I), Meneval (III), Madame de Chastenay, Metternich (I), Caulaincourt, Molé, and Barante (I). Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Sorel, Driault, Lanzac de Laborie (III and IV), Masson (*Famille*, III, *Jadis*, I), Madelin (*Fouché*), Forneron (*Emigrés*, III), Herriot, and Gautier. Masson, *Petites histoires*. Masson, *Joséphine impératrice et reine*. G. Lacour-Gayet, *Talleyrand*, II.

# THE EMPIRE AT ITS ZENITH

## CHAPTER XXVI

### ON THE EVE OF GRAVE MISTAKES

The Blockade and England ; the latter is not intimidated and refuses the mediation of Russia ; the Tsar breaks with her only on paper. England tries to terrify Europe by the bombardment of Copenhagen ; the Tsar declares war on her. Prussia prostrate. Austria terrified ; Metternich in Paris ; his plan. The Pope refuses to participate in the Blockade ; the dispute is aggravated ; Miollis is ordered to return to Rome. Napoleon, in order to shut out England from Portugal, makes up his mind to occupy it ; he is thus forced to meddle with Spanish affairs. The Bourbons of Madrid. Napoleon regards Spain as weak and powerless ; he offers the Madrid Government to share with Spain in a partition of Portugal. Talleyrand and the Spanish problem. Junot in Portugal. Napoleon goes to Italy. The Milan Decrees. The Tsar insists upon the execution of the promises made at Tilsit and Napoleon encourages his hopes. The Bourbons themselves submit their disputes to the Emperor. The latter now determined to seize Spain. He assures the Tsar that the peace of the Continent will not be disturbed.

**T**HE Berlin Decree by which the Continental Blockade had been established had deeply perturbed the whole of Europe, and England had immediately been filled with anxiety.

She was very far from being subdued, however. A new Ministry had just been formed which, with Castlereagh and

**England not Subdued.** Canning, included some of the most resolute and determined opponents of imperial France. With

its agents active everywhere, the British Cabinet, in spite of the fact that everything seemed to point to defeat, felt confident of victory. As a matter of fact, the whole of the

Continent seemed to be under the Emperor's thumb. Portugal was the only country in Europe which still remained open to the English, and it was for this reason that as early as the summer of

**Portugal.** 1807 the Emperor made up his mind that the

House of Braganza must cease to exist, and was planning its execution, a task which the brilliant success he had already achieved made him feel he could easily accomplish with

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the help of Spain. But England, with a clear-sightedness for which she must be given due credit, had no difficulty in seeing all the weak points in this mighty power ; she was convinced that its defects arose from the Blockade itself. If Napoleon wished to make the Blockade effective, he was condemned to various new enterprises which by extending it would also weaken it.

And, indeed, the Blockade, the idea of which had much to commend it, did actually inveigle the Emperor into the most deplorable enterprises. It was the policy of the Blockade which introduced the most virulent factor of dissolution into the Russian alliance. It was the policy of the Blockade which, by providing

Results  
of the  
Blockade.

him with a fresh excuse to annex the Papal States, still further embittered the conflict with the Holy See. It was the policy of the Blockade which, by hurling him against Portugal, was responsible for dragging him down into the Spanish abyss where, in due course, the decline of his fortunes was to set in.

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The Tsar had left Tilsit determined to carry out the conditions of the Treaty to the letter. The smallest hesitation on his part would have jeopardised the magnificent acquisitions in Finland and the Balkans which he hoped the alliance he had concluded would bring him. Napoleon, moreover, carrying on the work begun at Tilsit, was flattering and fawning upon him, paying him from Paris all kinds of attentions calculated to tickle his vanity, however much he might be on the alert against such insidious weapons. The most important of them was the despatch to St. Petersburg of Caulaincourt who was made Ambassador, and who, as everybody knew, was quite unscrupulous in his efforts to please Alexander. But the French alliance still remained odious to every Russian, and to accept it would have meant, as Caulaincourt himself shortly afterwards wrote, "a change of religion." This remark, which I have already quoted, puts the whole matter in a nutshell.

Russia  
Hostile to  
France.

But, unfortunately, all this was well known in London. Woronzoff, the Tsar's representative there, declared that he felt humili-

## ON THE EVE OF GRAVE MISTAKES

ated by the engagements entered into at Tilsit, an admission but ill calculated to make the English Ministers take altogether seriously the haughty offer of mediation which Alexander had undertaken to make to the British Cabinet. Here again England was clear-sighted. Moreover, the lack of determination with which the Russian Ambassador, who was still personally hostile to France, communicated this offer of mediation on the 10th of August, 1807, may well be imagined, and its immediate refusal is not surprising.

This answer ought to have led to a rupture between London and St. Petersburg. But when the Tsar communicated it to Paris, he did not express any intention of declaring war on England, and only decided to do so when the latter, setting the whole world at defiance, more or less forced him into it by various imprudent acts of violence. And even then he resolutely maintained that he did so purely as a matter of principle.

England had, as a matter of fact, been expecting this ever since the summer of 1807, and far from yielding an inch she made up her mind to strike a heavy and dramatic blow. It was necessary to give a warning to those countries who were entering into relations with Napoleon or seemed likely to do so. Declaring that she had been informed that Denmark was in this position, she made up her mind, as she had done in 1801, to sow terror in the Baltic States by "executing" this little country which lay at her mercy. On the

16th of August an English squadron appeared before Copenhagen and disembarked some troops. The Government was called upon to deliver up its fleet, and when it replied with an indignant refusal, the Danish capital was bombarded with red-hot balls from the 2nd to the 7th of September. As the city was in flames and menaced with being occupied by the English, the Government was obliged to give way and hand over the fleet, which the British vessels immediately carried away captive to various English ports.

This "execution" gave rise to intense excitement and universal reprobation. Nevertheless, it was not until England had added insult to injury by instructing her Ambassador, Lord Gower, to

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call upon the Tsar to make public the clauses of the Treaty of Europe  
 Indignant. Tilsit that the latter decided to break off relations by giving Lord Gower his papers. And even then he allowed the Ambassador to leave agents behind him with instructions to influence public opinion in Russia and keep it favourable to England.

Nevertheless, the Tsar's action seemed definitely to have cleared up the situation in favour of the Emperor. What could the other nations do against him at this juncture? Prussia had, indeed, reached the lowest depths of degradation.

Prussia  
 Abject. "Tell me the part you wish me to play among the European Powers," wrote her unfortunate King to

Napoleon. Austria, too, had been living in a state of terror ever since Tilsit, convinced that, even more than England, it was she who was footing the bill for the Treaty. And when, after the bombardment of Copenhagen, she was also summoned by the Emperor to break with England, she did not hesitate long. Count Metternich, who had been Austrian Ambassador in Paris

Metternich  
 Urges  
 Austria to  
 Give Way. ever since the Peace of Pressburg, urged the Viennese Government to give way, for the time being, to all Napoleon's demands. A politician full of guile and cunning, this fine gentleman cherished dreams of vengeance more resolutely

than any of his fellow-countrymen, but he meant to make sure of his object by exercising all the patience necessary for a masterly intrigue. The Franco-Russian alliance made him tremble for the fate of Europe even more than for that of the country he served. And he was determined, after having gradually undermined this alliance, to place his master in the Tsar's position of intimate friendship with Napoleon. As soon as he had brought about a conflict between the Allies of Tilsit, Austria would be in a position to profit by it or to level the treacherous blow against the victor of Austerlitz, which by laying low the tyrant of Europe would liberate all those who had fallen victims to his all-conquering might. Thus it was above all imperative not to

The  
 Blockade  
 Established. run foul of Napoleon, and on the 18th of October, 1807, he prevailed upon his royal master to submit, and to break off relations with England like the

rest. Apparently, his advice was followed without delay. From

## ON THE EVE OF GRAVE MISTAKES

that moment the Continent was really closed against all trade with England, and the Blockade became, officially at least, the law of Europe.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was no country which the Emperor was more determined should obey this law than Italy, *his* Italy. But, even here, he encountered what he termed "the ill will of the Italy. Court of Rome." The latter, it will be remembered, had not lost a single opportunity during the past two years of giving proof of this "ill will." The occupation of Ancona by Gouvion-Saint-Cyr's troops in October, 1805, which really constituted a violation of the Papal Marches, had already led to considerable excitement in Rome; but when, on the 21st of June, 1806, the Emperor made the Pope's refusal to expel the English an excuse for ordering General Duhesme to seize Cività Vecchia, which was really the port of Rome, the outburst of indignation may well be imagined.

Napoleon, who was in Berlin at the time, had, on the 12th of November, summoned Arezzo, the Papal Nuncio, resident in Dresden, and after pouring out his grievances to him, had despatched him to Rome to convey "his wishes" to the Pope. He was to inform the latter that the Emperor would not hesitate to deprive him of his temporal power "which the most saintly of the Popes had never enjoyed," but that he would be spared this disgrace if he expelled the English from Rome, which, he declared, was the only refuge they still had in Italy. The Pope, moreover, was to join "his Italian Confederation," for he could not tolerate the existence "between his Kingdom of Italy and his Kingdom of Naples of ports and fortresses which, in the event of war, might be occupied by the English, and compromise the safety of his States and his peoples." Pius VII was to be given until the end of February, 1807, to submit.

He had not submitted, and Jackson, the British Minister in Rome, had truculently remained there in spite of Napoleon's protests. On his return from Tilsit the Emperor made up his mind to put an end to all this, though he was perhaps still



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

hesitating on the threshold of an embittered conflict, which he had sincerely wished to avoid. But his imperial **He Refuses.** arrogance was raising a mirage before his eyes which completely obliterated all reasonable considerations. He was "Charlemagne"; nay, he was more than Charlemagne! In any case he was "Emperor of Rome," lord of the Roman States which he merely allowed the Pope to manage. And now, lo and behold! this priest was the only ruler in Europe who refused to break with England, and thus created a gap in the Blockade! When he was again summoned to expel the English, the Pope persisted in refusing, and it was essential that, since everybody else was submitting to the Blockade, there should not be a State in the very centre of Italy which continued to remain outside it.

On the 22nd of July, 1807, Napoleon addressed to Eugene the most violent letter he had ever written on the subject of the dispute with "this parson breed." He told his **Napoleon's** son-in-law also to write to the Court of Rome, and **Anger.** sent him the draft of the letter, which was hardly less violent, though couched in more seemly language. "As the pillar of the Christian Faith" in Europe, the Emperor demanded that the dispute between himself and the Pope should be settled by the despatch of a Legate to Paris.

Pius VII's reply was dignified, but tinged with deep melancholy. He refused to give way, but was willing to send the Legate. He had the tact and delicacy to choose for this office a French member of the Curia, Cardinal de Bayane, who took the Alpine route forthwith. Whereupon, the Emperor, in a violent scene with the Legate Caprara on the 30th of August, announced his intention of seizing all the Marches. The Pope, at first indignant, withdrew

**The Pope** Bayane's powers, but, suddenly seized with fear, he **Consents to** gave way and consented to close his ports to the **Support the** English. Napoleon should immediately have re- **Blockade.** lent, but the bad faith born of ambition now became apparent, and he insisted on the Pope undertaking to make common cause with him against every enemy of the Empire. This would have meant the complete and blind subjection of the Holy See to the imperial power. The Sacred College, on being consulted by Pius VII, unanimously rejected any such demand, and on the 12th of December the Pope

## ON THE EVE OF GRAVE MISTAKES

**Napoleon's Overbearing Attitude.** communicated this refusal to Paris. As soon as he received it on the 10th of January, 1808, Napoleon ordered General Miollis, then in Florence with his division, to march on Rome. He hoped once more to intimidate the Pope, to subject him to his will and thus close the conflict. But, on the contrary, he merely embittered it. And this political dispute, inevitably destined before long to spread to the sphere of religion, seriously impaired the Emperor's relations with the Catholic provinces of his Empire, and had even more disastrous results when later on he blindly hurled himself into a further conflict with the most fanatically Catholic countries of Europe—Portugal and Spain.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Above all we must wrest Portugal from her alliance with England," Napoleon had written to the King of Spain immediately after Tilsit. For the last sixty years, Portugal, under the House of Braganza, had been so closely linked with England, both politically and economically, that she almost constituted a British colony in Europe. And when, on the 15th of October, 1807, the Emperor, in the presence of the diplomatic corps, informed Count Lima, the Portuguese Minister, that his country must close her ports to British goods, he himself felt very doubtful whether such a demand would be accepted by the reigning dynasty in Lisbon. A French army was accordingly mustered as early as the summer of 1807 under the command of Junot, and destined for the conquest of this "anglicised" country.

**Junot sent to Portugal.** Spain allowed the French forces to enter her territory with apparent alacrity. The wretched family enthroned in Madrid had consented in advance to accept a share of the spoils taken from the House of Braganza, and yet it was undoubtedly this expedition—apparently largely facilitated by the compliance of the Spanish Government—which, through the "Spanish imbroglio" was to lift the lid of Pandora's box and let loose a host of evils.

At this juncture, the shocking state of degradation into which the Spanish Bourbons had sunk was a scandal in the eyes of all Europe. Charles IV, a man of sixty, stupid almost to the point

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

of imbecility, had for the last thirty years been tied to his wife's apron-strings. She was one of the Parma Bourbons—Maria Luisa, but she in her turn had been completely subjected, and was literally possessed by Manuel de Godoy, a mere member of the Bodyguard, and an extremely vulgar creature, who had been raised to the highest offices until he had become the absolute master of Spain. The people, although they detested him, were accustomed to accept anything from their rulers, and bowed their heads. From the three sons born of this wretched union, Spain had nothing to hope. They were thoroughly mediocre, and Ferdinand, the eldest, was as lacking in intelligence as in physical courage. Nevertheless, Godoy feared them, and had succeeded in inspiring the Queen with a veritable hatred of her unfortunate offspring who, for their part, like miserable Atridae, though devoid of the heroic grandeur of their prototypes, would have trampled across their parents' faces in order to overthrow the favourite.

Under these degenerate Bourbons, Spain seemed to have sunk into a state of hopeless decadence, and Napoleon must be excused for having been deceived. A prey to all the evils that senility can produce, she seemed to have delivered herself up entirely into the hands of her Princes, to whom she was devoted, and into those of the priests who were alone able to guide men's minds by an appeal to conscience. But the Spanish character still remained supremely proud and haughty and any opposition on the part of an outsider was apt to excite it unduly. Herein lay the menace which nobody would have expected to find among a people apparently utterly disintegrated and whom the whole of Europe, standing on the threshold of momentous happenings, would, had they been in Napoleon's shoes, have regarded as weak and negligible.

The Emperor did not know Spain, though he knew her Princes only too well. For the last seven years he had made use of them, despising them the while. As for Godoy, he regarded him as a miserable wretch, a vulgar schemer, ever ready to betray. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1807, he had not the slightest intention of attacking the Spanish Crown. This revealed a change in his

## ON THE EVE OF GRAVE MISTAKES

mentality which, more than any external event, led to defeat and, later on, to disaster. In the first place it seemed that, hitherto so determined, the Emperor had in this case from the very beginning allowed himself to be led by events. As early as the end of 1808 an unsatisfactory start had been made, and we find Napoleon writing that, in this matter he had been "carried away by force of circumstances." This was perfectly true. Nothing could have been more hastily planned than this disastrous enterprise, with the result that it was impossible for it to be carried out with the confidence and certainty of those campaigns every detail of which Napoleon had carefully weighed, pondered, and prepared again and again, and accordingly brought to a successful issue without a hitch.

**Napoleon  
Carried  
Away by  
Circum-  
stances.**

The Portuguese problem, as I have already observed, led him to consider the subject of Spain. The latter offered to support the expedition against Portugal, but only on condition that she was handsomely rewarded. Yzquierdo, Godoy's private agent in Paris, had confessed to Napoleon what the favourite's supreme ambition was; he wished to be made the ruler of a principality founded for his benefit in the menaced country; another might be found for the Infanta Marie-Louise, Queen of Etruria, who would hand over her Italian Kingdom to the Emperor. The negotiations resulted in the Treaty of Fontainebleau of the 27th of October. Junot was given orders to march on Lisbon, and soon the north of Spain was filled with French troops.

**Godoy's  
Ambition.**

It was now that the "force of circumstances" came into play. No sooner had the treaty been signed than Napoleon, who, having settled the Portuguese problem, was preparing to set out for Italy, received a letter from Charles IV containing the most alarming news. In view of the degradation to which Godoy's "policy" had reduced Spain, Canon Escoiquiz and the Duke of San Carlos, two friends of the Infante Ferdinand, Prince of the Asturias, had arranged for an outbreak of disturbances, under cover of which they intended to engineer a Palace Revolution in favour of the Prince. The plot had been discovered and Ferdinand had been imprisoned in his own apartments under threat of prosecution for

**Charles IV  
Appeals to  
Napoleon.**

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

high treason. Meanwhile, Charles IV had, of his own free will, denounced to the Emperor, as though he were really his suzerain, the plot on the part of his "unworthy" son to which he had almost fallen a victim. But almost simultaneously the Infante's friends had also sent a pressing appeal to Napoleon in the name of the Prince of the Asturias. He claimed the Emperor's protection and, as a pledge of loyalty, begged for the hand of a Bonaparte Princess. Thus, the Spanish Royal Family itself provoked Napoleon to intervene in its affairs.

Now, for some weeks past, the Emperor had been discussing this Spanish problem with the most dangerous adviser whom, in the circumstances, he could possibly have chosen—Talleyrand. Without actually putting his cards on the table, the Prince of Benevento was urging the Emperor to dethrone the Spanish Bourbons and encouraging him to substitute his own dynasty in Spain as he had done in France. With his usual capacity for making the worst crimes appear in the light of profound political

**Talleyrand  
and the  
Spanish  
Problem.**

manœuvres—the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien, for instance—Talleyrand proved to the Emperor that to install a French prince in Madrid would maintain the political traditions of France, and that in dethroning the grandson of Louis XIV he would be

merely reviving one of the loftiest conceptions of the Great King himself—that is to say, he would be setting "French blood" on the throne of Charles V. But the matter did not seem to be ripe at the moment when the letters from the Spanish Princes reached the Emperor. He did not answer them, but contented himself with sending a corps, described as a "corps for keeping watch on the Atlantic coast," to reinforce the troops originally destined to support the army of Portugal in case of necessity. And he contented himself with advising Charles IV to show mercy. Whereupon, he took his departure for Italy, hoping that in his absence circumstances would work in his favour on the other side of the Pyrenees.

Meanwhile, Junot's army had entered Spain, and was making for Portugal. It had, moreover, met with a sympathetic reception in the Spanish territory it had traversed. But, truth to tell, as some of Junot's officers themselves confessed, the spectacle afforded

**Junot  
Crosses  
Spain.**

by this army was not calculated to confirm the picture the

## ON THE EVE OF GRAVE MISTAKES

Spaniards had drawn for themselves of the marvellous French soldiers. Very far from it! As the Grand Army was still in Germany, Junot's forces had been made up of extremely young, badly equipped and badly trained conscripts. Moreover, Junot, anxious to reach Lisbon quickly in order to seize the members of the House of Braganza, was demanding too much of these raw recruits. The forced marches demoralised them, and tired them out, and soon, along all the roads of Spain, there were more stragglers who had fallen out than soldiers marching

**Deplorable  
Condition  
of his  
Troops.**

in orderly ranks. Lack of discipline and confusion prevailed among these troops before a single shot had been fired. Junot, an extremely courageous soldier but a mediocre General, whose rise could only be attributed to the loyal friendship of ex-General Bonaparte, was the worst possible man to lead an army. And his forces soon presented the most pitiful spectacle. The sight of this disorganised army naturally produced a very bad impression on the Spaniards. And there can be but little doubt that if Portugal had resisted, the French would have advanced straight to disaster. The march from Alcantara to Abrantès through the mountains proved the last straw for these unfortunate troops; a mere handful of some 4,000 or 5,000 men succeeded in reaching the latter place; they were in rags and shod with string-soled shoes full of holes. But, fortunately for the future Duc d'Abrantès, the Portuguese Princes were thinking only of flight, and on the 27th of November they set sail for Brazil and

**He Enters  
Lisbon.**

threw up the sponge. Junot, who arrived in Lisbon a few hours later, seized the Government and immediately began to play the King.

Meanwhile, Napoleon had gone to Italy, thus, for the time being, creating for himself a sort of alibi as far as the Madrid business

**Napoleon  
Goes to  
Italy.**

was concerned. Truth to tell, he had more than one matter to settle on the other side of the Alps. He was going to pay a visit to Venetia, for the last two years a province of the Kingdom of Italy, and was hailed even in Venice, by the "patriarch" Gamboni, with dithyrambic fervour. "You have saved France, but you have made Italy!" he exclaimed. From Milan, moreover, the Emperor had settled a hundred and one important and

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

unimportant matters in Italy. The Kingdom of Etruria was abolished and once again became the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, forming part of the Grand Empire. The Princess Élise was made its ruler. But the main point at issue still remained the question of Rome. The flattering unction with which, from Venice to Genoa, the most powerful prelates had greeted the King-Emperor misled him. Since the Italian clergy were welcoming him with so much verbal enthusiasm, he could only conclude that the rupture with the Holy See, now a matter of common knowledge, and the occupation of Rome, would not only be accepted, but actually approved. And thus the man who had "made Italy" flattered himself that Rome would soon be seen submitting to his yoke without giving rise to scandal.

Nevertheless, from Lombardy, the Emperor continued to follow all the important enterprises in which he was engaged. First and foremost came the Blockade. It was necessary to retaliate against another Order in Council on the part of England by which neutral vessels were illegally ordered to touch at some English port before proceeding to the Continent. The retaliation

The  
Milan  
Decrees.

took the form of the Milan Decrees of the 23rd of November and the 17th of December, by which any ship which had allowed itself to be searched by England or had entered an English port was to be regarded as English and treated accordingly. If neutrals—which meant Americans—still wished their goods to enter Europe, they must shake themselves free of British tyranny, and therefore break with England.

But while Napoleon imagined that he was fighting with his feet firmly planted on solid ground, his Russian ally was already only half-heartedly supporting him. The Tsar's dismissal of the British Ambassador was merely a matter of form, though this did not prevent him from expecting immediate payment for this

The  
Tsar's  
Demands.

counterfeit rupture. And he began pressing Napoleon to settle his plans for the partition of Turkey. The Emperor, perturbed by his impatience, endeavoured to provide other objects for his ambition. And Alexander sent his new Ambassador, Count Tolstoi, to Paris to enter into negotiations. It was an unfortunate choice, for Count Tolstoi was probably more mistrustful of the

## ON THE EVE OF GRAVE MISTAKES

French alliance than any other man in Russia, and his presence in Paris was by no means calculated to help matters. True, Caulaincourt had arrived in St. Petersburg with instructions to satisfy the Tsar, at least by means of flattering words; but it was not long before he fell a victim to Alexander's charm, and rather than being the interpreter of Napoleon's wishes in St. Petersburg he became the mouthpiece of the Tsar's recriminations, veiled though they were. Meanwhile, the Emperor considered himself certain of the enforced neutrality or the active friendship of all the continental Powers. But, on the contrary, they were all keeping an eager watch for his mistakes, and he forthwith proceeded to make the worst blunder he could possibly have committed. For just at this juncture the Spanish imbroglio, in which he was to become hopelessly entangled, began to develop.

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Terrified by the growing hatred against him in Spain, Godoy's one thought was to save his treasures. And he even went so far as to advise the King and Queen to follow the example of the Portuguese Royal Family and flee to South America, which was still almost entirely Spanish, leaving the throne to Ferdinand. Charles IV was now soliciting for this son, but lately in disgrace, the hand of the Emperor's niece, for which, as the French Ambassador had written, the Infante was also "begging on bended knee." Napoleon, on his return to Paris on the 1st of January, 1808, picked up the Spanish dossier once more, and Talleyrand continued to advise him to intervene. He did so all the more energetically, seeing that he felt his advice to be secretly agreeable to the Emperor, which meant that he was rising in the latter's estimation. But Napoleon was still hesitating. He was quite willing to consider the solution that had presented itself—the replacement of Charles IV by the Infante Ferdinand, previously married to Lucien's daughter, Charlotte, and thereby closely attached to the "French system." But the choice of the young princess, who was somewhat unwillingly sent by Lucien to her grandmother, was soon discovered to be unwise. Brought up in the embittered atmos-

**Proposed  
Marriage  
of the  
Infante to a  
Bonaparte  
Princess.**



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

phere of her father's house, and imbued with the deepest antipathy for her relatives, she was imprudent enough, when she arrived in Paris, to give free and unfettered expression to the criticism inspired by the spectacle of her extraordinary family. Her letters were opened and the Emperor warned, with the result that he came to the conclusion that "Lolotte" married to Ferdinand would prove anything but a reliable bond of union between France and the young prince when he mounted the throne. He therefore sent the girl back to her father and a happy consummation thus failed to be achieved. As a matter of fact, Talleyrand's advice was bearing fruit. In the last crisis Ferdinand had proved to be as degenerate as his parents; it was imperative for all these Bourbons to be cleared out of Europe. Henceforward, the policy of France was to use vague menaces in order to hasten the proposed departure for America, which would

The  
Bourbons  
to be turned  
out of Spain.

leave the throne of the Bourbons, as well as that of the Braganzas, vacant. The Emperor dispatched reinforcements to the troops which were gathering between the Pyrenees and Portugal, and sent deliberately evasive replies to the heartrending appeals of the Spanish Royal Family.

He had now made up his mind to seize Spain. But before taking any active steps he wished to consolidate the Russian alliance, which, in case of grave happenings, was alone capable of maintaining peace in Europe. On the 2nd of February, 1803, he wrote Alexander a letter in which he once more conjured up dreams of oriental conquest. While urging the Tsar first and foremost to settle the matter of Finland with all possible speed, he pretended to regard a united expedition against the Ottoman Empire as possible before long. And this would lead France and Russia, *via* Constantinople in the direction of India, where he had always hoped to be able to strike a blow against "Albion." "The work of

The Tsar  
Invades  
Finland.

Tilsit," he wrote, "will decide the destinies of the World!" Alexander, now feeling that the future was assured, fell upon Finland. After some facile successes he met with difficulties there which kept

him busy far away from the Balkans. But once more enticed by the eastern mirage he was, for the time being, anxious that his great ally should nowhere meet with a reverse. The latter could,

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therefore, turn his back on the Rhine and devote his attention to Spain. - Not a finger would be raised either in Berlin or Vienna, because for the moment St. Petersburg so willed it. Thus, everything seemed to favour the Spanish enterprise. The die was cast !

For sources and bibliography see the end of Chapter XXVII.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE SEIZURE OF SPAIN AND ROME

Murat in Spain. The revolution of Aranjuez. Ferdinand, proclaimed King, wishes to have his position confirmed by Napoleon, and leaves for Bayonne. The King and Queen of Spain hurry after him. The *Dos de Mayo*. The Bayonne interviews. Charles IV hands over his crown to Napoleon, who gives it to Joseph. Murat's exasperation. Napoleon believes the matter to be settled. The second mistake; Miollis occupies Rome; the Pope, shut up in the Quirinal, keeps Miollis at bay; the danger of this situation. Europe and the proceedings at Bayonne. Austria arms and then, filled with fear, calls a halt. Napoleon "moves his Kings"; Jerome is sent to Westphalia; Murat to Naples. The Grand Empire seems complete. Napoleon turns his attention to the partition of Turkey. "The Spanish *canaille*."

**Murat Sent to Spain.** ON the 20th of February Murat was made Commander-in-Chief of all the French forces which, for weeks past, had been crossing the Pyrenees. As a matter of fact, his instructions did not impose any very great activity on him. He was only to advance by slow marches towards Madrid, and was to return evasive replies to any questions addressed to him—the surest method of inspiring fear. The fact was that Napoleon hoped by this means to hasten the departure of all the Royal Family for Cadiz on their way to America. The Spanish throne would then become vacant and the people, indignant at the defection of its rulers, just as the French had been after the flight of Louis XVI to Varennes, would certainly accept the King the all-powerful Emperor chose to give them.

**The French Welcomed by the Spaniards.** The Grand Duke of Berg crossed the Pyrenees on the 27th of February, and was welcomed in the northern provinces with every sign of favour. The Spaniards, indeed, convinced that the Emperor's brother-in-law was marching on Madrid merely for the purpose of setting the King free from the degrading yoke of Godoy, and saving the Infante Ferdinand from his enemies, gave the French a hearty welcome. Mean-

## SEIZURE OF SPAIN AND ROME

while, the wretched King and Queen had left Madrid for the neighbouring palace of Aranjuez, from which their departure for Cadiz would be more easily kept secret from the populace. The latter, however, suspected their intention, and suddenly rumours of their flight were circulated. The Madrid mob rushed to Aranjuez on the 17th of March, declaring that it was the miserable Godoy who, in order to save his own millions, was forcing the Royal Family to desert Spain. They must be prevented from doing so by being delivered out of the hands of this detestable adviser. In a moment the mob had burst into the palace. The unfortunate Charles IV hoped to save himself by deserting Godoy, and consented to proclaim the fall of the favourite who, routed out of his own residence, was dragged, beaten and buffeted, to a dungeon, and threatened with immediate execution. The Infante Ferdinand, raised aloft in triumph, seemed to have won the day. Charles IV, trembling in his shoes, abdicated, and that same evening Madrid acclaimed Ferdinand VII as King and saviour of his country.

The French army was only a few miles from Madrid when, on the 21st of March, Murat heard of what had taken place at Aranjuez. The situation filled the Grand Duke of Berg with the rosiest expectations, and he immediately formed a plan in keeping with his own personal desires. For two years Joachim had been filled with frantic longings for a Crown, which he had hoped at one time to find in Warsaw. And now, lo and behold! another had suddenly sprung to view. And what a Crown! The Crown of Charles V! Fate must be given a helping hand, and the first step was to prevent Ferdinand VII from mounting the throne. To succeed in this object Charles IV must be made to withdraw his abdication; he must be induced indignantly to disinherit his son, whereupon the miserable monarch would have to be persuaded to abdicate again and appeal to Napoleon to provide an occupant for the vacant throne. The only possible choice would be that brilliant soldier and astute politician who had engineered the whole business!

As a preliminary, Murat therefore refused to recognise Fer-

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dinand as King, and entering Madrid on the 23rd of March, he immediately seized control of the police, placed Godoy in safety, and had no difficulty in persuading the old King and Queen, who were bursting with gratitude, to do as he wished.

Except for the accession of his brother-in-law to the throne, Napoleon, even before receiving news of all that had taken place, had also thought out a plan similar to Murat's. But he did not altogether trust his brother-in-law's zeal, which was too deeply tinged with self-interest, and as soon as he received his letter, he sent Savary to Madrid. The latter was becoming more and more his right-hand man. On the 2nd of April he set out himself for Bayonne, whither the French agents in Madrid were to induce Ferdinand to repair in order to "plead his cause."

Napoleon  
at  
Bayonne.

Ferdinand decided to take their advice, and, accompanied by his two councillors, Escoiquiz and San Carlos, who after the Aranjuez revolution had been set free from the dungeons into which Godoy had cast them, he left Madrid, having first appointed a Regency Council. But, on receiving the news of his departure, his parents were filled with alarm amounting to desperation; their wretched son would turn the Emperor against them! Whereupon their one thought was also to hasten to meet him and warn him against Ferdinand.

On the 14th of April the Emperor was in Bayonne. On the 20th the Prince of the Asturias, after considerable hesitation, also arrived there and sent his *alter ego*, Escoiquiz, to Napoleon. The latter did not conceal anything from the Canon, who was filled with consternation at his intentions. The Bourbons had made themselves impossible in Spain, and Ferdinand could not be allowed to reign in Madrid any more than Charles IV.

The  
Bourbons  
at Bayonne.

Meanwhile, the old King and Queen were also hastening to the Emperor, Murat having supported their design with an eagerness and alacrity that can well be imagined. He had had the name of Ferdinand VII deleted from all public documents, and in the absence of any legal authority had created an illusory Junta, while seizing the real power himself.

On the 30th of April Charles IV and his wife, accompanied by their inseparable Godoy, reached Bayonne. As early as the 27th,

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Napoleon, who had been warned, wrote somewhat cavalierly to Josephine, "I don't know where I shall put up all this crowd!" The royal pair were immediately confronted with their son, whom they overwhelmed with the bitterest reproaches. So great was their fury against him that, in order to deprive him of the throne, the miserable wretches were quite ready to deliver up their country into the hands of Napoleon. And, indeed, a few hours later, Charles IV, after having declared that he withdrew his abdication, appointed the Grand Duke of Berg his Lieutenant-General, and thus paved the way for abdicating once more. "If I am not very much mistaken," wrote the Emperor to Talleyrand, "this is the fifth act of the tragedy; we shall soon have the dénouement!"—"If I am not very much mistaken!" Alas, he was most grossly mistaken! It was not the last act, it was merely the prologue. The curtain had only just risen on the real tragedy which was to last for many a long year; it was to consist of several acts, all of them painful and heartrending.

He was mistaken; and yet, on the 5th of May, he received news which, even at the eleventh hour, might have revealed the truth to him.

Light was beginning to dawn on Madrid. The Emperor of the French, it was declared, had led the Princes into a trap, and in every class, anxiety was succeeded by sullen fury. Whereupon it was learnt that the rest of the Royal Family who had remained in the capital, the King's younger sons, his brother and the Infanta Maria Luisa, were also, thanks to Murat's machinations, to be sent to Bayonne. The news, which deprived the friends of the dynasty of all hope, gave rise to an outburst of rage and indignation.

On the 2nd of May—*Dos de Mayo*—the insurrection, which had been simmering for days, was disclosed. I use the word

*The Dos de Mayo.* deliberately; for there is proof that it had been in preparation for some time. At dawn a crowd of

peasants, who were to play a more prominent part in the affair than the city mob, burst into the town. When at eight o'clock the carriages, destined for conveying the last members of the Royal Family out of Madrid, appeared, the crowd broke loose, and an aide-de-camp, sent by Murat to salute the royal travellers, was met with a hail of stones, and would have been torn to bits if

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

some grenadiers had not come to the rescue with fixed bayonets. They, too, were met with shots, which gave the signal for a general insurrection. The mob fell upon anybody wearing the French uniform and unfortunate soldiers were literally torn to bits. But at the first shot, the Grand Duke of Berg took all the measures necessary for quelling the uprising, ruthless though they were. The soldiers left the barracks in good order, and drove back the peasants. The mob had made for the Arsenal, which was occupied by Spanish troops, who proceeded to fraternise with them; but Murat made himself master of the Arsenal, and at last stamped out the rebellion. Whereupon, with Charles IV's letters in his hands, he assumed supreme control.

On the 5th Napoleon received the news of all that had taken place in Madrid. It should, I repeat, have enlightened him in time regarding the attitude of the Spanish people. But, on the contrary, he merely regarded it as an excuse for precipitating events. He summoned Charles IV to his presence and terrified him by his indignation. The old man, in his turn, sent for Ferdinand, and in the Emperor's presence overwhelmed him with furious abuse, even raising his stick against his son, who was literally crushed,

### The Bayonne Interviews.

while the Queen heaped the most abominable insults on the head of the unfortunate wretch.

Napoleon was an almost embarrassed witness of this terrible family quarrel, to which he summarily put an end. If by the evening Ferdinand had not renounced the throne, the Emperor declared he would be unable to oppose Charles IV's justifiable desire to hand over to justice a rebellious son who had been guilty of plotting the death of his parents. And,

### The Treaty of Bayonne.

without further ado, he concluded the "Treaty" of Bayonne with the old King. The latter handed over his crown to the Emperor to dispose of as he thought fit, on condition that Spanish territory

was maintained intact and the Catholic religion recognised as supreme. Charles IV and his wife, together with Godoy, were sent to Fontainebleau, while Ferdinand and his young brother were despatched to the Château de Valençay, the possession of which Talleyrand owed partly to the Emperor's munificence, and where he was told to keep the young Princes and "amuse" them.

## SEIZURE OF SPAIN AND ROME

On the 10th of May Napoleon offered his brother Joseph the throne of Spain thus left vacant ; Joachim Murat was to take his place at Naples. This was yet another mistake added to those already committed. As I have before observed, everything connected with this Spanish business was a mistake, and leaves the historian staggered. Is there such a baleful influence about certain actions that it poisons the whole atmosphere and makes it lethal? Be this as it may, certain it is that the grave mistake, both from the moral and the political points of view, of driving the Bourbons from Spain was to lead to so many others that one stands aghast. And Joseph's appointment, I repeat, was also a mistake ; in the first place it filled Murat with bitter resentment. So great was the latter's disappointment that at first he was almost overwhelmed. He had a bad attack of jaundice which soon provided him with an excuse for suddenly resigning his command of the army and the Government of Madrid in order to take a water cure. But, between the 5th of May, the date on which the Bourbons signed their downfall, and the 28th of that month, when Murat threw up the sponge, a most critical period, it was an embittered invalid who was responsible for maintaining order. When the sick man took his departure on the 28th, there was an interval of a month before the new King, making his way in leisurely fashion from Naples to Bayonne, eventually took up his residence in the Escorial. And it was during these seven weeks that the opposition, favoured by this fatal interregnum, was organised.

The Emperor had obviously lost his clearness of vision. And he was all the more liable to be guilty of one mistake after another, seeing that on the 5th of May he regarded the Spanish episode as closed. Not only did he imagine himself assured of the submission of the Spanish people, he also believed them to be grateful. And it was in all sincerity that, on the 26th of May, he addressed an appeal to them full of cordiality and pride. "I hope your remotest descendants will remember me and say : He was the saviour of our country !" He was already talking of immediately introducing the *Code Napoléon* beyond the Pyrenees, and—biggest mistake of all !—imagined he was winning "the

Joseph  
Made King  
of Spain.

Murat's  
Resentment.

Napoleon  
Thinks  
Everything  
is Settled.



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

hearts of the people" by proclaiming the abolition of the Inquisition, which, regarded in Paris as a "monstrous institution," in the eyes of the Spaniards almost stood for a tutelary power. Nevertheless, during this period of illusion, the Emperor met with his first rebuff. He had summoned a meeting of the three Orders of the Spanish people at Bayonne. These *Cortes* which were meant to acclaim Joseph should have numbered 120 deputies, but only forty presented themselves. And, on the 7th of June,

**Joseph  
Enters  
Spain.**

Joseph, who had arrived in Bayonne, had to be content with their meagre support. When, a few days later, he crossed the frontier and entered San Sebastian, a French soldier heard a female voice

cry out from the middle of the silent crowd: "A fine fellow! He'll look fine on the gallows!" This exclamation, which raised a laugh, should have provoked a shudder. As a matter of fact, the whole country, worked up to a pitch of feverish excitement, was only awaiting the signal for a general revolt to be given.

\* \* \* \* \*

The situation was all the more serious seeing that the conflict with Rome had meanwhile grown more embittered and provided the Spanish priests and monks with an excuse for crying "Anti-Christ!"

Miollis had entered Rome on the 3rd of February, by the Porta del Popolo, and had marched straight on the Castle of Sant' Angelo; he had driven out the Papal garrison there, and had then surrounded the Quirinal where the Sovereign Pontiff was in residence.

**Miollis  
Occupies  
Rome.**

The Roman people, being essentially prudent, had shown neither consternation nor irritation. From this the French had concluded that at heart all they wanted was to be delivered from the "rule of priests," and that if they did not acclaim the "liberators" it was only from fear of the Pope and his thunderbolts. Nevertheless, Miollis found himself isolated, and being an amiable man he was pained and somewhat embittered. Moreover, whenever his duties led him to encroach upon the powers already in existence he met with stolid resistance, above all on the part of the prelates in office. The Pope did not hurl his thunder-

## SEIZURE OF SPAIN AND ROME

bolts against him, but organised passive resistance from the Quirinal, and of the two Governments which at that time shared Rome between them, that most readily obeyed, after three months of French occupation, was the one that had neither bayonets nor guns at its command. But Pius VII did not

**The Pope  
Shut up  
in the  
Quirinal.**

allow any act of violence to pass without protest. In the Consistory of the 16th of March, 1808, he formulated a more general and vigorous protest against the blows levelled at him. Napoleon

**Annexation  
of the  
Marches.**

replied by the decree of the 2nd of April, definitely annexing the Marches. Whereupon the Pope forbade the Bishops of these provinces to take the oath of allegiance to the usurper. A state of tension prevailed and, in Rome, constant disputes occurred between Miollis and the Government. The blow the Pope most resented was the seizure of his new Secretary of State, Gabrielli, who was sent to his native Marches. In his irritation, Pius VII replaced him by one of his most implacable prelates, Cardinal Pacca, though there was no need for the latter to advise the Holy Father to persist in his protestations. He was now genuinely up in arms and let himself go, his recriminations becoming more and more embittered. By June, 1808, relations had become so strained that at any moment the Pope might be expected to hurl an edict of excommunication against the Emperor.

Now it was at this very moment that Napoleon, together with his brother, was imposing his rule on the Spanish people, whose patriotism was fostered more than that of any other country by fanatical devotion to the Catholic faith.

Europe would probably have looked extremely askance at the Bayonne proceedings had not the Tsar, as we know, reverted, just at this juncture, to an attitude of profound regard for Napoleon. The King of Prussia regarded the spoliation of another dynasty as a bitter reminder of the menace hanging over his own, and interpreted it as a further reason for lowering himself to make fresh protestations of loyalty and even, to use his own expression, of "repentance." As a matter of fact, he had about him a group of patriots who were secretly endeavouring to restore their unhappy country. They had found a leader in Baron von Stein, whom Napoleon himself had mistakenly advised Frederick William

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

to choose as his Minister. In spite of the difficulties put in the way of such an enterprise by the Treaty of Tilsit, he was trying by ingenious underhand methods to provide his country once more with an army and, above all, to give a soul to the Government.

The King tried to ignore him, pretended to ignore him. In any case it was too soon to warn Napoleon by showing the slightest sign of disapproval.

Conditions in Vienna were very different. In spite of the counsels of prudence sent from Paris by the wary Metternich, the anti-French party, who had the upper hand, gave expression to the liveliest indignation against the Bayonne "outrage." Francis II

regarded it as a personal menace; the Russian alliance, moreover, alarmed him almost to the point of desperation. He felt that his country would be called upon, sooner or later, to pay for it, and at one moment it seemed as though he had made up his mind to risk all. On the 12th of May the Government issued a decree by which all able-bodied men were to undergo military drill; on the 9th of June the *Landwehr* which developed out of this somewhat vague measure was founded and began to take shape. Andréossy, the French Ambassador, reported that the country was seething with excitement, and that, according to his calculations, an army of 662,219 men would shortly be raised. He also repeated the audacious declaration of Graf von Stadion, the Chancellor: "Austria has reached the point when she can say: *Noli me tangere!*" In any case, she regarded herself as strong enough to postpone the recognition of Joseph as King of Spain.

But to counterbalance this sudden outburst of energy on the part of Austria, Napoleon was able at this juncture to rely on his

return to favour with the Tsar. The latter, who had once displayed so much indignation at the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, treated the Bayonne "affair" extremely lightly. In any case, when he was told of it, he exclaimed in Caulaincourt's presence, though doubtless he did not mean what he said: "I thought Napoleon had filled every page of history, but he still has a wonderful opportunity in Spain. He will be the regenerator of that country!"

## SEIZURE OF SPAIN AND ROME

Napoleon, on being informed of the attitude of his Russian ally, had reason to feel confident of the future.

\* \* \* \* \*

From Bayonne, where, after Joseph's departure for Madrid, the Emperor lingered on for a few days, he cast a confident glance over the Grand Empire to which his brother's accession to the throne of Charles V had given its final form. Its magnificence exalted his pride; from Bayonne he had just "moved his Kings" as easily as his Minister of the Interior might have moved his Prefects.

The Grand Empire had now been established in its entirety for a year. On the 18th of August, 1807, the young Jerome, who

Jerome	was only twenty-three, had been made King of
Made	Westphalia. It was the Emperor's fond hope
King of	that this Kingdom, formed out of the provinces
Westphalia.	filched from Prussia between the Rhine and the
	Elbe, with Cassel as its capital, and organised by his

own agents, would provide the pattern for a modern State to be held up to the admiring gaze of the whole of Germany. He had dictated its Constitution, which was entirely based on the principles of the imperial French Government, and communicated it somewhat cavalierly to Jerome. "My dear brother, you will find herewith the Constitution of your Kingdom." In all probability the young King, who had only just left school, overjoyed at the thought of being a King, that is to say of enjoying his position, never read it. But it was not necessary for him to do so, for Napoleon had provided him with three reliable Ministers chosen from the Council of State—Siméon, Jollivet and Beugnot—who were to form not so much a ministerial as a judicial Council for the young Prince. But as early as the autumn of 1807, Napoleon, irritated by his manner of life, was obliged to urge him to be more modest and to take his position more seriously. "You must not imagine that the Kingdom of Westphalia is merely a private estate," he warned him. Whereupon Jerome regarded himself as the victim of fraternal despotism.

Napoleon had been making similar appeals for some time to Joseph, Louis and even to Murat, as Grand Duke of Berg. These new princes could not resign themselves to being mere Viceroys,

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

and attributing their position, either like Joseph to "the love of their subjects," or like Louis to "the will of God," or like Murat as due to "services rendered," they no longer felt bound to the man who had made them. They even felt almost independent of his system, and, worse still, of France, who had raised them to power together with him. All of them were already rebellious at heart, and were encouraged in their attitude by the secret pressure of their subjects. And in 1808 Napoleon must, indeed, have been strangely misguided to persist, not only in continuing this family system, but actually in extending it yet further.

As by Joseph's accession to the throne of Spain the throne of Naples became vacant, Caroline Murat, who for the last two years had been filled with fury at not being a Queen, had her ambition

gratified—Joachim was summoned to take Joseph's place. But Joachim, still smarting from his disappointment with regard to Madrid, only

accepted this "insignificant" kingdom with a lump in his throat, and was thenceforward even more inclined than his brothers-in-law to regard himself as having been slighted, and oppressed, when he became King. Moreover, with two more principalities at his disposal, the Grand Duchy of Berg and the Kingdom of Etruria, now once more the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Emperor still turned to his own family; he gave the former to Louis Napoleon, the son of Louis and Hortense, a child of three, under the control of a Regency, consisting of Councillors of State (this choice at least was not destined to land him in any difficulties) and the latter to Élise, who was already a Princess in Italy, "the Semiramis of Lucca" as Talleyrand called her.

By the summer of 1808 the Grand Empire was apparently complete and the family system perfect. Round about imperial

France, under the direct rule of the Emperor, and as yet possessing only Piedmont beyond her natural boundaries, a huge circle of States had been formed, a belt almost as large as France herself—the Kingdoms of Holland and Westphalia, the Grand Duchy of Berg mounting guard over the

Confederation of the Rhine, which was also linked up with the system under the "Emperor-Protector," Switzerland, nominally independent, but really attached to the "Emperor-Mediator,"

## SEIZURE OF SPAIN AND ROME

and lastly, the Kingdom of Italy, which from Venetia to the boundary of Tuscany was under the sceptre of the "King-Emperor," and further extended by the Kingdom of Naples, even more dependent under Murat than it had been under Joseph. As a bulwark in Central Europe, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw provided an advance guard which, in the hands of the King of Saxony, constituted a State even more subject to the imperial will than those governed by Napoleon's own brothers. And now, to the south-west, the circle was closed by Spain handed over to Joseph, and flanked by Portugal, which, in the occupation of Junot, was ready to be "annexed." The whole of the west was in the hands of the new Charlemagne, an Empire twice the size of that which had acknowledged the sway of his prototype. Soon Rome was to be added—"a second imperial city"; and so it would go on!

No spectacle could have been more terrifying than that of this top-heavy and hastily constructed Empire in 1808, a mass of provinces and States in the hands of a single man, and a man, moreover, who insisted on knowing everything, deciding everything and laying down the law for all. Napoleon himself founded

**A Top-heavy Empire.**

fantastic hopes upon it which he believed he could realise before long. Master of the greater part of Europe, the ally of Russia, with Prussia under his thumb and Austria completely paralysed, he imagined he could form an unbroken continental front against England. He had realised his aim; the road was completely barred to English goods and English intrigues; the wall had been raised against which she would dash out her brains, unless, dying of hunger, she fell exhausted at the foot of this impregnable barrier. If she did not surrender at once, the Emperor was prepared to strike a blow at her further afield, and

**Napoleon Considers the Partition of Turkey.**

it was in all sincerity that he now opened up to Russia the vista of a partition of Turkey. For, with a magnificent army at his disposal, which would be further augmented by his allies, he was able to look forward to the prospect of securing the lion's share for himself—Greece, the Aegean Islands, Syria, and Egypt would open up to him the road to India from which, in the year VII of the Republic, he had as a young general been obliged, with fury in his

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

heart, to turn aside. Here he would strike England a mortal blow and would make himself Master of the World !

But a handful of ragged peasants armed with carbines rose up in rebellion in the villages of Castile. To shouts of "*Viva el Rey !*" fires were lighted. At first they were few and far between, but soon they were linked and became one vast conflagration. And

The  
Spanish  
*Canaille.*

the mob—" *canaille*," as the French called them—fell upon a few soldiers, who, ill equipped to fight under a blazing sky, put up a poor defence.

Whereupon an army was surrounded. Then other provinces also rose up, until a whole country, regarded by all Europe as being beneath contempt, was seething with rebellion. This meant good-bye to all the Emperor's fine dreams ! The worm was now in the fruit, and would devour it. All the mistakes made in a few short months were to recoil on his head, and combining against the Master of the World sooner or later make shipwreck of his Empire.

SOURCES. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XV, XVI, XVII. Comtesse d'Albany, *Portefeuille*. Murat, *Lettres*, VI. Memoirs or Reminiscences by Talleyrand, Caulaincourt, Savary and Queen Hortense. Polovisoff, *Correspondance des ambassadeurs russes en France*.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Sorel (VII), Masson (*Famille*, IV, *Jadis*, I), Madelin (*Fouché*), Vandal (*Napoléon et Alexandre*, I), Arthur Lévy, Levasseur, Driault (III), G. Lacour-Gayet and d'Haussonville (*L'Eglise romaine*). Geoffroi de Grandmaison, *L'Espagne et Napoléon*. L. Madelin, *La Rome de Napoléon*. Masson, *Jadis et aujourd'hui: Le Dos de Mayo*. Comte Murat, *Murat lieutenant général de l'Empereur*.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### ERFURT

The Spanish insurrection. The Capitulation of Baylen ; Spain evacuated as far as the Ebro. Napoleon's anger. The consequences ; Austria raises her head ; Germany disturbed. The Emperor relies on the Tsar. The latter's enthusiasm cools and he reassures Austria. Napoleon, in order to fortify him, asks for an interview. The Tsar accepts ; his object. Napoleon decides to meet him at Erfurt in order to make an impression on Germany. He sends Talleyrand ahead ; the latter's hostile attitude towards Napoleon ; he is determined to do him a bad turn. Napoleon's expectations from the interview. Alexander feigns tender friendship. Talleyrand warns him ; the Tsar must "save Europe." Alexander, taking the warning to heart, raises difficulties ; he is authorised to invade the Principalities. The Kings at Weimar. The Treaty of Erfurt. The Alliance, apparently strengthened, is really undermined.

**B**ETWEEN the 10th and the 20th of May, Spain had learnt what had taken place at Bayonne. And a prolonged quiver of rage convulsed the country. Napoleon had utterly misunderstood it. As Sorel very rightly says, Spain idolised its monarchy just as France had once idolised the Revolution. In no other country would such an uprising have presented a greater menace to the "oppressor." A people impetuous, even in their pleasures, whose blood ran hot and

The  
Spanish  
Character.

feverish through their veins, accustomed to violence by constant disputes, inclined to cruelty, haughty in their listless ease, unable to change their ideas because they were the fruit of their passions, and blending the basest sentiments with the noblest feelings of revolt, the Spaniards were all the more indomitable because the vast multitude of priests and monks in the country used every means in their power to whip them up into a state of frenzied excitement. In so far as she was Royalist Spain would, no doubt, have been subjected after one or two successful battles ; but Catholic in her own violent fashion, the moment, through the teaching of her priests, she learnt to identify the cause of Christ



## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

with that of the Bourbons and regarded Napoleon as "Anti-Christ," she became savagely invincible.

As soon as the Bayonne outrage had been committed, the towns of the Asturias were the first to be set alight. Within three days a Junta had been organised in the province, and sent a deputation to England begging for help. Meanwhile, the conflagration spread from village to village, and before long from province to province — Galicia, Leon, Old Castile, and Andalusia. The insurrection extended even to the foot of the Pyrenees, and, before a month had passed, it had reached the frontier. As early as the 30th of May the whole of Spain was ablaze.

Napoleon was surprised, but in no way alarmed. Already on the bridge at Cabezon, near Valladolid, Lasalle had cut down the miserable insurgents, laughing with his officers at the fine panic which had put them to flight. Dupont, at the head of his army corps, was advancing on Cordoba, declaring he was having a "walk-over." True, he was soon obliged to retreat before the forces of Andalusia which had risen in revolt. But the Emperor was sending him reinforcements. Soon over 100,000 men had crossed the Pyrenees and were under the command of Dupont, Moncey, Reille, Duchesne, Verdier and Bessières. But Verdier had already failed against Saragossa, which had also risen in rebellion.

Joseph, meanwhile, was making his way to *his* capital. The road to it had to be opened up for him, and Bessières was entrusted with the task. At Medina del Rio Seco he came up against a regular little army and put it to flight. On receiving the news of this victory, Napoleon was completely reassured. "Never was a battle won in more important circumstances," he wrote; "it has settled the Spanish business." On the 20th of July Joseph entered Madrid, and Dupont was once more sent out against Andalusia. He was one of the most famous divisional commanders of the Grand Army, a leader who, in the German and Polish campaigns, had covered himself with glory. But intoxicated by success, he did not take this Spanish war seriously; he advanced recklessly and met with a terrible disaster.

Hardly had he crossed the Sierra Morena and occupied Cordoba than Dupont felt himself isolated in the midst of a whole host of insurrectionaries far more formidable to deal with than a large

## ERFURT

regular army. He retreated and took up his position at Andujar, where he awaited reinforcements. General Vedel, who was trying to join him, ran into Reding, one of the insurgent leaders, who, by attacking Dupont at Baylen, hoped to cut him off from Vedel. But, just as Vedel seemed on the point of crushing Reding, another Spanish General, Castaños, suddenly sprang up out of the Sierra, and took Dupont in the rear. Wedged in between Reding and Castaños, Dupont believed himself to be surrounded. Apparently he was unduly terrified, the heat, which on that July day in Spain was terrific, helping to unbalance him. Imagining himself threatened with seeing his men cut to pieces before his very eyes, he signed a capitulation, and, losing his head entirely, included Vedel also. As Vedel was certainly not surrounded, 17,000 Frenchmen were delivered over, almost without having fired a shot, into the hands of the insurgents, intoxicated with savage pride. It was said—and even the Emperor believed this infamous rumour—that Dupont had all too readily agreed to a capitulation, the main clause of which allowed him to retire on Madrid with all his arms and baggage, in order to save his wagon-loads of booty. History has absolved the unfortunate Dupont of this odious imputation. He was an extremely brave soldier, who on this occasion merely lost his head. Be this as it may, the Spaniards violated the terms of the capitulation, declared the French soldiers to be prisoners of war, and confined them on the island of Cabrera, where nearly all of them died of want, hunger or sickness.

The effect throughout the whole of Spain was only what was to be expected. One of Napoleon's armies had been defeated and forced to capitulate! Spain was delirious with pride and joy.

**Joseph Flees from Madrid.** King Joseph, terror-stricken by the sinister news, did not wait twenty-four hours before beating a precipitate retreat from Madrid, and this over-hasty flight increased the sense of disaster. It was both undignified and unnecessary, and hot on his heels a flood of insurrectionaries made their way northwards, driving the French forces before them. The latter soon lost their footing and hurriedly evacuated the villages, and the provinces, leaving only a few isolated detachments here and there, which were quickly overwhelmed.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

The worst of the matter was, that Portugal, apparently reduced to subjection after the flight of her princes, was also set alight by the unheard-of success of the Spanish insurrection. An English expedition, which had been in preparation for the last three months, was about to land there. It was under the leadership of a man who, though still young, was called upon to win the highest meed of glory, that of one day defeating the conqueror of Europe.

**Wellesley in Portugal.** This was Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, a typical Englishman, filled with implacable hatred for "Bonaparte," whose evil genius he was destined to be.

He landed, on the 1st of August, in Mondego Bay, and Junot immediately perceived disquieting signs of activity in Lisbon, which had hitherto been perfectly calm. The levity of the Duc d'Abrantès was incredible; abandoning himself to a life of pleasure he had taken no precautions against insurrection or against an English invasion. He hurled himself upon the English; it was a clumsy attack and was repulsed. Whereupon he fell back discouraged on to the French lines at Torres Vedras. The disastrous news which reached him completely demoralised him; almost panic-stricken at the idea of retreating across Portugal, which had now risen in revolt, and then across Spain, evacuated by the French, he preferred to enter into negotiations with Wellesley. The latter agreed to allow him to capitulate honourably, and on the 30th of August the Convention of Cintra was signed. The little French army of between 12,000 and 15,000 men was to be transported to England in British vessels.

By the 6th of September there was not a single Frenchman left in the Iberian peninsula as far as the Ebro. But all along the roads, in the branches of the trees, there hung the pitiful remains of thousands of wretched soldiers who had been surprised and torn to bits; or else they had been ripped open and nailed to the doors of barns and outhouses. And the bottomless hatred of a whole people became puffed up with delirious pride. Spain had driven out the soldiers who for fifteen years had made all Europe tremble!

## E R F U R T

Convinced that the victory of Medina del Rio Seco had "settled the Spanish business," Napoleon had set out for Paris; but as he wished to visit the south-western provinces and above all La Vendée, he carried out his intention. It was at Fontenay, in La Vendée, that he received the despatch informing him of the

**Napoleon's**      Capitulation of Baylen. His rage was terrific, and  
**Rage.**            the grief he also felt was wellnigh shattering.

Moreover, with his usual rapidity in summing up all the consequences of an event, he immediately perceived what the probable results of this lamentable venture would be—all his enemies in Europe would be secretly or openly triumphant, hostility against him would be encouraged, alliances would be shaken, and his prestige would be compromised. But the feeling which for the moment ousted every other consideration was one of shame. "I have a stain on it, a stain!" he exclaimed again and again, touching his coat.

He was right in foreseeing that Baylen would have disastrous results, not only in Spain but in the whole of Europe. On hearing of the catastrophe, which was to be followed by the news of the capitulation of Cintra, Europe—above all Germany—was stirred to the depths.

Between Austria, preparing for a final struggle, and Prussia, champing at the bit, the German States of the Confederation

**Austria**            were also beginning to grow restive. Though but  
**Raises her**        a short while previously they had been most  
**Head,**            favourably disposed towards France, the people

of these districts were showing signs of bitterness; although Germany seemed to be utterly disintegrated, she had still kept her soul alive. Having somehow or other managed to survive the downfall of the Teutonic world, she was showing fresh signs of life, and, as early as 1807, felt vaguely that her pride had been wounded by the humiliation of Austria after 1805 and the abasement of Prussia after 1806. Encouraged by these sentiments, the great intrigue began to develop which, with its centre in Vienna, sent its ramifications into all the German towns. But it was from Berlin, as may well be imagined, that the most virulent seeds of hatred were broadcast.

That unfortunate country, Prussia, considered herself the chief victim of the "Moloch" who was devouring Europe, and,

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

humiliated beyond endurance, she remained rebellious at heart. Baron von Stein was no longer the only man who secretly endeavoured to organise revenge. Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Boyen, all of them exasperated patriots, left it to the Baron to renew the ties with other countries, and applied themselves to

Germany  
Disturbed.      their own particular job—that of once more raising an army, in spite of all the conditions imposed at Tilsit. “The object of the war should

be the deliverance of Germany by the Germans,” wrote Stein to Vienna. The King, more or less informed of what was going on, seemed at first to discourage his Ministers’ activities. But on receiving the news of Baylen, he gave Stein his head. The latter was guilty of a serious slip ; a letter, addressed by him to Wittgenstein, and in which his plan was openly revealed, fell into the hands of some French agents. “Events in Spain,” he wrote, “are causing a great sensation and prove what a country can accomplish which has the strength of courage. . . . Here war between France and Austria is regarded as inevitable ; it will decide the fate of Europe and consequently our own.” Napoleon, on being informed of this, made up his mind to lance the abscess ; he daringly published the intercepted letter in the *Moniteur* and demanded the surrender of the “traitor.” Frederick William, terrified out of his wits, did not hesitate to sacrifice the patriotic Minister, but Napoleon, using the incident as a pretext for tightening the noose in which Prussia was writhing, forced the King to resign himself to even more stringent undertakings.

“War is inevitable,” Stein had written after Baylen, another war between Austria and Napoleon. The whole of Europe thought likewise. And, indeed, Austria had begun to make preparations forthwith.

European  
War  
Inevitable.      Napoleon wished to know where he stood, and on his return to Paris, on the 14th of August, when he received the diplomatic corps at Saint Cloud, he questioned Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador, on the matter, though without any sign of hostility. The latter denied everything, and protested that his country was perfectly friendly. The Emperor pretended to be satisfied. “I regard the incident as closed,” he said, as he dismissed the diplomat. But, in a letter to Louis, he wrote, “postponed until the spring.” In any case, he did not feel

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sufficiently confident to withdraw a large part of the Grand Army from Germany without having taken other precautions. He counted on prevailing upon the Tsar to address such a stern protest to Austria that she would immediately disarm.

Truth to tell, he found Alexander less eager than he had been a month previously. In his case, too, Baylen had left its mark. Russian high society had hailed the news with joy. Doubtless

the Tsar did not allow himself to be influenced ;  
**The Tsar's** for some months past he had, as we know, been  
**Attitude.** cherishing greater hopes than ever of deriving all manner of benefits from the alliance, but as his Finnish enterprise had been complicated by an unexpected and determined resistance on the part of Sweden, he found himself somewhat embarrassed in that quarter. Nevertheless, he contented himself with warning Vienna that it was "inopportune" to attack Napoleon at the moment. "It will always be time enough to take sides when occasion demands it," added this strange ally. And in violation even of the secret clauses of the Treaty of Tilsit, he said he "hoped" that, in refraining from declaring war on Napoleon, Austria would spare him "the painful necessity of siding against her . . . a step which would be forced upon him only if she took the offensive"—which was calculated to reassure rather than to curb her.

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Even from a distance Napoleon felt that the Tsar's enthusiasm was cooling and required re-kindling. He accordingly asked Alexander to meet him in Germany.

The latter immediately agreed. The situation appeared far more flattering to him than it had been in July, 1807. He was no longer the man who at Tilsit had just suffered defeat and was obliged, to his intense mortification, to pay court to the victor. The shoe was now on the other foot. He would promise his ally to keep the Continent quiet while the latter polished off Spain, but in return for this service he would insist upon being allowed to proceed forthwith to the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire. Above all he would judge by Napoleon's attitude, and the degree of deference he paid him, to what extent he was in difficulties

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owing to the serious repulse he had suffered on the other side of the Pyrenees.

So sure was he of getting the best of the bargain that he took no notice of the determined opposition offered by all his horrified friends and advisers. And he made no bones about setting his sister Catherine's mind at rest. "Bonaparte thinks I am a fool," he declared. "But he laughs best who laughs last." With his family he was perfectly sincere and, as he told his mother, he constantly kept in mind that one day "the right moment" would come both for himself and for Europe, the moment when it would be possible to wreck the "ally" who was now running to meet him with open arms.

Erfurt had been chosen as the place of meeting. It was in the very heart of Germany, whom Napoleon wished to impress by making her a witness of his friendly interview with the Tsar, and also of his own all-powerful position, for he expected to see all the German Princes rushing to be present. There was no need for him to summon them; one and all humbly begged to be admitted, and the King of Bavaria was deeply distressed because he did not receive a prompt reply. "To fail to appear at Erfurt," he wrote, "would necessarily mean the loss of some of my political prestige." Napoleon had no intention of discouraging this competition; to disport himself before a *parterre* of Kings, as was said at the time, meant confounding his enemies and forthwith wreaking his revenge for Baylen. "A *parterre*!" exclaimed a scurrilous wag. "More like a *plate-bande*!" The fact of the matter was that the obsequiousness of the German Princes was to disgust everybody and, moreover, lead to a reaction among the peoples of Germany. "At Erfurt I did not see a single hand nobly stroking the lion's mane!" Talleyrand was justified in writing after the event.

Talleyrand, indeed, was present at the conferences. It seems almost incredible that Napoleon could have been guilty of so grave a mistake! For years past he had served the Emperor only half-heartedly, a fact which had not altogether escaped notice, and now in 1808 he had made up his mind actually to play him false. There is no denying the fact that, while doing him lip-service, he had always detested him, and though outwardly pliant and amenable,

Talleyrand  
Turns Traitor.

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his spirit had never surrendered. Moreover, as I have already pointed out, he had regarded his dismissal from office, for which he had been himself largely responsible, as a disgrace. But, worse still, ever since 1807 he had begun to doubt the future of the *régime* which he had himself helped to found in Brumaire. Its more or less immediate downfall now seemed to him inevitable, and already his one thought was to act in such a way—secretly, of course, for he was a cautious individual—as to be regarded by Europe as the only man who had seen through the Emperor's mistakes and was thus alone qualified, on the downfall of the Empire, to preside over its liquidation. The Spanish venture, into which he had unscrupulously enticed the Master, was turning out extremely badly, with the result that in September, 1808, he made up his mind gradually to separate his fate from that of Napoleon, and thenceforward to plot his ruin.

Unfortunately the Emperor at this time had not even begun to suspect the disloyalty of this miserable creature. Far less did

he believe him capable of treachery. Although, as I have already pointed out, he had the most profound contempt for him as a man, he valued him highly as a statesman. He could not dispense

with his advice and intended still to make use of his services. And thus, at the very moment when he was about to play for high stakes at Erfurt, it was to this traitor that he turned.

It was on the orders of the Master himself that Talleyrand hastened to Erfurt and arrived first. His one thought was to prevent the strengthening of the Russian alliance and thus save Austria. In order to make doubly sure he had persuaded Metternich also to attend this general European gathering, and he had even insisted on his making the Emperor Francis come too, "in order to create complications." Thus he was already seeking for complications when Napoleon had entrusted him with the task of simplifying matters. As for the Tsar, Talleyrand himself undertook to put him on his guard against any attempt to paralyse Austria.

Knowing all this as we do, the perusal of Napoleon's instructions to this strange representative almost makes us shudder. He was told to prepare a convention which, while satisfying Alexander, would be mainly directed against England, and which, the



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Emperor added, would set his mind at rest about everything else. But at his very first interview with Alexander Talleyrand did not conceal from him, and in fact a few days later openly told him, that on no account should he prevent Austria from arming, for, since the Tsar was destined to "save Europe by standing his ground against Napoleon," he would one day be only too pleased to find himself supported, in the final crusade, by a nation which still had some strength left. And it was to face this state of affairs that Napoleon left Paris on the 23rd of September and made for Erfurt to join in a game in which, under his very nose, the cards were to be marked.

**Napoleon  
Goes to  
Erfurt.**

\* \* \* \*

On the 27th the two monarchs greeted each other with the most effusive cordiality—to the "air of Tilsit," this time full blast! In the evening they attended a performance of *Cinna*, given by the Théâtre Français (for, as Metternich wrote, "they had brought the cadre of the tragedy" with them from Paris), and while the famous *parterre* of Kings looked on, they exchanged the most affectionate smiles—the cadre for the comedy! On the next day serious matters were discussed.

The Tsar knew exactly what he wanted. He wished to be allowed to invade the Danubian provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia and annex them forthwith. Napoleon had now resigned himself to abandoning this prey to him; all he stipulated was that Russia was not to seize it until the Spanish business had been settled. England, struck through Spain, would no doubt prove more amenable, and would be forced at one fell swoop to accept the linking up of the Iberian Peninsula with the Napoleonic Empire and the annexation of the above-mentioned part of the Balkan Peninsula by Alexander.

Thus it was once more against England that Napoleon wished to strengthen the bonds of the alliance; though eventually it was also to be turned against Austria. But before the twofold operation against Spain and the Danubë was embarked upon, he was anxious for the Tsar to paralyse Austria by adopting a haughty tone in Vienna. As for England, concerted action was to be taken to summon her for the last time to lay down her arms.

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From the very first conferences, opened with the utmost cordiality, Alexander had reason to feel satisfied. In clearer terms than he had ever before used, Napoleon agreed to the principle of handing over the Principalities to him. In the first flush of joy at this prompt acceptance of his demands, Alexander not only gave his full consent to the invasion of Spain, but also seemed determined to adopt a resolute attitude with regard to Austria as well as England. Thus, in the early days of October, a rosy glow, deepened by the festivities in the midst of which the conferences took place, seemed to pervade the atmosphere. All the German Princes had arrived; even Prince William of Prussia was to be seen among them, representing his unfortunate brother in this concert of adulation. It was before this "*parterre*," so flippantly dubbed a "*plate-bande*," that one evening, at a performance of Voltaire's *Œdipe*, when the famous line,

*The friendship of a great man is a gift of the gods,*

fell on the ears of the audience, the Tsar was seen to seize Napoleon's hand and hold it long and firmly in his own while the whole house swayed with emotion. Brilliant salons, at which semi-official conferences were held, were thrown open to the representatives of Europe. And it was in one of these that those present saw a newcomer make his appearance—Baron Vincent, who had been sent from Vienna to represent Francis II.

Filled with the most dismal forebodings, he was quickly reassured, for the hour of betrayal—Talleyrand's hour!—was striking.

The latter was surprised and disappointed at the way the conferences were progressing. Napoleon seemed determined to refuse the Tsar nothing, and Alexander, for his part, was apparently in entire agreement with his ally's views, and thought only of strengthening the bonds of the alliance. Talleyrand was becoming uneasy. And he made up his mind to intervene.

**Talleyrand** .. One evening, at a reception given by the Princesse  
**Sets to Work.** de Tour-et-Taxis, Alexander accosted him. "Has the Emperor told you anything just lately?" he enquired. "No, Sire, and if I had not seen Baron Vincent, I might have imagined that the Conference of Erfurt was merely a pleasure party."

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"What has Baron Vincent got to say?" "Sire, he is eminently reasonable. He hopes that Your Majesty will not allow yourself to be inveigled by the Emperor Napoleon into a threatening or at least an offensive attitude towards Austria. And if Your Majesty will allow me to say so, I am entirely of his opinion." The Tsar was extremely surprised. "I quite agree," he replied. "But it is extremely difficult. The Emperor Napoleon seems to be in a very strong position." "Not, at all, Sire. You must keep your eyes open." And he himself instructed Alexander what to look for. Encouraged by the reception he had received, Talleyrand decided upon further daring, and on the following day himself approached the Tsar and unbosomed himself. "Sire," he exclaimed, "what are you doing here? It is for you to save Europe, and you can only do so by holding your own against Napoleon. The French people are civilised; their ruler is not. The ruler of Russia is civilised; his people are not. Thus it is the duty of the ruler of Russia to be the ally of the French people. The Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees are conquests made by France. Everything else has been won by the Emperor and means nothing to France."

The fatal words had been spoken. Alexander was thunder-struck! The man whom he regarded as the foremost representative of official France had just assured him that the country was no longer following its ruler and, if he understood him aright, was actually longingly, like the rest of Europe, for a "liberator."

**The Tsar's  
Change of  
Attitude.**

This revealed to Alexander a state of affairs which he had hitherto been far from suspecting, and gave an extraordinary impetus to his secret designs. Whereupon Talleyrand went a step further and urged the Tsar to see the Austrian envoy and set his mind at rest, with the result that Alexander sent for Vincent. He confined himself to advising Austria to be careful, declaring that he felt himself in honour bound to protect her against any kind of aggression. The Austrian left the interview considerably relieved and could hardly conceal his satisfaction.

The result was soon visible. Napoleon, utterly at a loss to understand the change, found that the Tsar was either reticent or put forward fresh demands which he found extremely disquieting. One day a painful scene occurred; Alexander met a

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somewhat impulsive gesture on the part of his ally with such mortifying coldness that Napoleon was almost obliged to apologise. He could find no reason for this change of attitude. "Your Emperor," he observed to Caulaincourt at this juncture, "is as obstinate as a mule!" And he added with a sigh, "It's that devil of a Spanish business that is costing me dear!" But what really cost him dear was to control himself when he met with opposition on the part of the Tsar, who for some days past had been behaving in an almost provocative manner. He now refused to address a formal menace to Austria and, on the other hand, demanded extremely mistrustfully to be allowed to invade the Principalities without further delay. So little did Napoleon suspect the secret of this change of face that it was to Talleyrand himself that he confessed his mortification, and entrusted to the traitor the task of making the Tsar give way. It almost makes one weep! Naturally, no progress was made.

It was the more or less immediate invasion of the Principalities by Russia that prevented an agreement from being reached, and led to friction between the two monarchs which upset them both. They decided to refer the matter to their Ministers, Champagny and Romanzoff, and while the latter were closeted together to

**The Kings  
at Weimar.** discuss it, Napoleon suggested that to relax the tension of their minds the whole party should go for a couple of days to Weimar, during which there

was to be a hunting expedition on the battlefield of Jena. He persuaded the Tsar and all the German Princes, including Prince William of Prussia, to go with him. After the hunt he took the head of the table at a dinner for sixteen, all of them reigning Princes. At Weimar he endeavoured to win over to himself a

**Goethe and  
Wieland.** different type of magnate—the princes of thought, and had Goethe and Wieland presented to him.

It was here that the extraordinary conversation with these two leading lights of literature took place which has remained famous to this day. While it dazzled and flattered them, it did not altogether succeed in winning them over.

On the 7th of October the party returned to Erfurt. Champagny had not succeeded in making Romanzoff give way; the latter insisted on Russia being given a blank cheque for the Danubian campaign. Napoleon was now impatient to hurry off

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to Spain and, tired of hanging about, he instructed Champagny to give way to the Russian demands ; a few hours later the treaty was ready.

In it the alliance between the two Emperors was solemnly renewed, and was to take practical shape in a further extremely menacing communication being addressed to England, who was to be called upon to make peace and recognise the conquests made in the meantime —that of Spain by Napoleon and that of Finland and the Danubian Principalities by Alexander. It was likewise understood that if Austria opposed the Russian advance on the Danube or if, profiting by the absence of Napoleon in Spain, she attacked him in the rear, the two allies should unite against her. As soon as everything had been settled, Napoleon sent for Vincent and gave him a letter for Francis II, in which, to make doubly sure, he warned him in perfectly plain language against the evil counsels which had led him to enlarge his army. But it was Alexander alone who, by adopting a stern tone, would have been able to put a stop to the arming of Austria ; however, as we know, his attitude towards Francis II's representative had been most conciliatory.

On the 14th of October the two Emperors left Erfurt. They made their way side by side engaged in friendly conversation, and when they separated they embraced each other and promised to meet again. They were destined never to meet again. Had they any presentiment of the future ? They certainly did not foresee that in four years' time Napoleon would be in the Kremlin, and two years after that Alexander before the heights of Montmartre. As they separated they seemed preoccupied, and as they said good-bye people noticed that they were deeply moved. Napoleon rode slowly back to Erfurt without saying a word to those about him, and Savary for the first time remarked an expression of fatigue and even of sadness on his face.

The fact of the matter was that, although he was ignorant of three-quarters of the intrigues being hatched around him, he could not help feeling that something had happened to make the results of the interview disappointing. Alexander had shown obvious signs of resistance which, on one occasion at least, had been translated into haughty speech, through which Napoleon had

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caught a glimpse of a very different man, and had divined that behind his ally's smiling exterior a secret adversary lay hid.

As for Alexander, his attitude when he left Erfurt had undergone a strange transformation. Talleyrand's revelations had opened up such prospects for him that he no longer felt the same as he had done at Tilsit. Moreover, he had learnt that the lion could be made to give way, and the alliance with the Great Man no longer seemed so desirable in his eyes. St. Petersburg had been disgusted by the Erfurt Conference, and, ignorant of Alexander's secret designs, certain firebrands were even talking of getting rid of a Tsar who was "betraying" old Russia. Alexander was aware of this, and even had he still been in favour of maintaining the alliance, he would not have dared to say so. Already he was dragging it about like an old love for whom he blushed. He was not going to sacrifice anything for it.

How could Austria possibly fail to suspect this crisis? On the eve of Erfurt she was still hesitating, but Alexander's attitude towards Vincent had reassured her. Moreover, Talleyrand put the finishing touch to his treachery by taking care to inform Metternich that it was no longer possible to move the Tsar against Austria. On hearing of this change in the situation, Stadion, the Austrian Chancellor, wrote a fortnight later: "If war does not enter into Napoleon's calculations, it must certainly enter into ours."

Such was the result of the abortive conferences of Erfurt.

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## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE SPANISH CAMPAIGN

Spain in a ferment ; the Spaniards hope to surround Joseph's army. The Emperor's plan ; he is at first badly served by Joseph and his Marshals. He crosses the Pyrenees. Soult at Burgos. Victories of Tudela and Somosierra. Napoleon marches on Madrid. He aims at wiping out the English army under Moore. His difficult march on Galicia. Just as he is about to crush the English he is stopped at Astorga by despatches received from France. He entrusts Soult with carrying on the operation ; the latter allows the English to embark at Corunna. The Emperor obliged to return to Paris.

**N**APOLEON returned to Paris on the 19th of October entirely obsessed by the Spanish campaign. He thought it would require only five months to put down the insurrection in Spain and thrust the English into the sea. But for this swift and heavy blows would have to be delivered. Three-quarters of the Grand Army had been rapidly transferred from Germany to the Pyrenees—150,000 men who were to join the 100,000 already encamped in Spain behind the Ebro. As early as the 29th the Emperor himself was hastening towards Bayonne. It was high time for him to cross the Pyrenees. Ever since the retreat following upon Baylen, Joseph and the French Generals had been doing nothing but make the most foolish mistakes and seemed likely to make more. The retreat showed that they had all lost their heads entirely, and the spectacle had still further inflamed the truculent pride of the Spaniards already almost unbearable after Baylen. As a matter of fact, the situation presented Napoleon with yet another opportunity for victory, for the overweening pride of these Spaniards was fast developing into foolhardy presumption.

The Spanish leaders were discussing nothing less than a magnificent manœuvre by which all that remained of the French forces between the Ebro and the Pyrenees would be wiped out. Joseph's army was to be attacked on the wings and outflanked ;

## THE SPANISH CAMPAIGN

the Spanish troops were to push forward into Biscay on the one side and Aragon on the other, on the right and left of the French, and Joseph's soldiers were to be cut off from the Pyrenees, surrounded and forced to capitulate. None of the Spanish leaders entertained the smallest doubt of success, and had immediately proceeded to carry out this magnificent plan. It was, moreover, to be supported by Wellesley's army of some 35,000 men which was to leave Portugal for Spain.

Napoleon, from the distance, had quickly seen through this marvellous plan over which the improvised Spanish Generals were exulting. It did not perturb him in the least; on the contrary, he saw in it an opportunity for a manœuvre which fitted in admirably with his designs.

The Spaniards, in order to outflank the French, would have to extend their own wings, or if they strengthened their wings, it would be at the expense of their centre. Napoleon hoped to reach Joseph at Vittoria in time to take command of this great battle. Meanwhile, he would allow the enemy to advance both on the right and the left, deliberately offering only half-hearted resistance. Whereupon he would fall upon the Spanish centre with the magnificent troops he had brought with him, and breaking it, would turn on the enemy's wings, thus isolated, and annihilate them. Thus, in a few days, an Austerlitz on a grand scale would decide the fate of Spain.

As early as the end of August he had told Joseph and the military leaders to keep strictly on the defensive in their strong position behind the Ebro, and allow the Spanish armies to take the offensive on the east and west, without showing any apparent desire either to forestall or even to arrest their manœuvres.

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As a matter of fact, Joseph did not agree with this plan and prided himself on being able to restore the situation single-handed before his brother's arrival. In this he was encouraged by Marshal Jourdan, whom the Emperor had authorised to accept the position of the King's Chief of Staff. The King adopted the Marshal's plans and, under his guidance, had thought out a whole manœuvre, the knowledge of which had fortunately been very



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badly received by his subordinates. But even the Corps Commanders, although they discouraged the premature offensive which Jourdan wished to make, did not, on the other hand, seem fully to grasp the idea which the Emperor made known to them immediately on his arrival. Insisting, as we know, on allowing the Anglo-Spanish forces to advance both on the north-east and the north-west, he ordered the French Generals not to retaliate. But Lefebvre, who was on the French right, opposite General Blake, who had entered Biscay, could no longer support seeing his adversary gliding along the Pyrenees, and launched a vigorous counter-attack, driving him back on Old Castile. He thus spoiled part of Napoleon's cherished scheme.

The Emperor, on reaching Bayonne on the 3rd of November, was extremely displeased, and even more so on the 5th, when he fell like a bomb right into the middle of Joseph's General Headquarters at Vittoria and found everything at sixes and sevens. He immediately

took over command. Moreover, he did not abandon any part of his plan of campaign, but still counted on attacking the enemy's centre, breaking through it and penetrating as far as Madrid, when he would turn against the enemy's right, which, in spite of Lefebvre's unfortunate counter-attack, was still venturing further afield, and force General Blake and his army into the sea.

Soult was entrusted with the task of breaking through the centre. He marched in the direction of Bourgos and, on the 10th of November, a swiftly decided engagement took place. Baylen

had made the Spaniards careless and over-confident, and the position they had taken up was not altogether favourable. In a few hours they were put to flight, and evacuated the hills to the north of Bourgos, which General Mouton was already beginning to occupy by the end of the day. Soult was hot on his heels, and on the next day Napoleon himself arrived on the scene. The enemy's centre had been broken.

While on the French right Victor and Lefebvre were making an immediate attack on Blake and routing part of his forces at Espinosa, the rout of the Spanish army at Bourgos left Napoleon free to send Soult against the Anglo-Spanish forces, who were

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thus caught between two fires, and even before Madrid was reached the Marshal had begun operations by hurling himself on the Asturias in the north-west. There remained the Spanish right under the command of Palafox and Castaños, "the victor of Baylen." Cut off from their centre ever since the battle of

**Victory of  
Tudela.**

Bourgos, they were attacked by Ney and Lannes and put to flight by the latter at Tudela. But,

as Palafox shut himself up in Saragossa, Castaños was merely hurled back with the remnants of his army on Madrid.

The Emperor, however, was already marching on the capital. In order to reach it he was obliged to go through the Guadarrama Pass, where it seemed that the enemy would endeavour to make a desperate stand. But Napoleon was determined to force it,

**Victory of  
Somosierra.**

and Victor was sent on ahead to reconnoitre.

He discovered that the Spaniards had rallied and taken up their position in the Somosierra Pass; whereupon under cover of a thick fog he immediately attacked.

At dawn on the 30th of November the enemy was driven out of his front line, and even before the infantry had pushed on further, Napoleon launched an attack against the second line, which was covered by sixteen guns. It was led by Monbrun, a brilliant General placed in command of the magnificent regiment of Polish light horse which the Emperor had created and attached to his Guard. Hurling themselves right on to the artillery batteries, these intrepid Polish horsemen, though suffering some losses, broke through and cut down the Spanish gunners at their posts. Before long the Polish *shapskas* appeared at the top of the pass; they seized the guns and proceeded to pursue the Spanish army, which was now in full flight. The road to Madrid lay open.

The insurrectionary Junta, which had shortly before been installed at Aranjuez, fled to Badajoz. Madrid was unable to resist, and on the 4th of December Napoleon entered the city.

**Napoleon  
Enters  
Madrid.**

A state of siege, with all the rigours it entailed, was immediately proclaimed, and was to continue in full force until the people had been reduced to desiring the return of Joseph.

For Napoleon had made up his mind to restore that sorry monarch. For a moment he had contemplated abandoning the

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idea, but Joseph, on being consulted, had protested against this "act of spoliation" with as much indignation as if he had been the descendant of Charles V. "I found him in a very bad state," observed Napoleon to Roederer. "He has become quite the King!" On the 7th of December the Emperor issued a proclamation in which he warned the Spaniards that if they did not submit to the "constitutional system" apparently represented by Joseph, he "would put the crown of Spain on his own head, and would know how to make it respected by those who wished to make trouble."

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Meanwhile, the remnants of the Spanish armies having been hurled back on Andalusia, Napoleon made up his mind to devote his whole attention to the destruction of the English army under Moore, which, attacked simultaneously by Lefebvre and Soult, seemed in great danger of being surrounded. Its leader, Sir John Moore, was, indeed, in somewhat of a predicament. Seeing that

there was no hope of his being able to reach Portugal, where Wellesley would have welcomed him, his one thought was to gain some Galician port and take ship. On the 22nd of December the

Emperor again made his way through the Guadarrama Pass on his way north-west to take charge of the operation himself. Unfortunately, he had a terrible journey across the mountains on account of the dreadful weather. His men were completely demoralised—this had never happened before—and murmurs, which almost developed into threats, were heard even in the close vicinity of the Emperor himself.

The difficulties of the march had retarded the main operation. Nevertheless, the situation was still favourable. Soult, having come south from the Asturias, was close on the heels of Moore, whom Ney could attack on the other side. Napoleon urged on the manœuvre. Moore, menaced with being caught in a vice, hastened his retreat. He hoped to reach Benevente before the French and escape to Corunna, where he would take ship. He reached Benevente on the 27th; the French did not enter the place until the 28th. But the English General had already slipped between the claws of the pincers, though there was yet

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time to catch him up. On the 2nd of January, 1809, Napoleon arrived at Astorga, convinced that all would be over in a day or two—the enemy, hard pressed, would not have time to embark.

But at the very moment he entered Astorga a messenger arrived with news which cast him into the deepest gloom. Austria

**Napoleon  
Receives  
Bad News.**

was again making preparations, and there could be no doubt that before two months had passed, the Archduke Charles might be in Bavaria, on his way to the Rhine. Further despatches

revealed that in Paris itself sedition was rife and that Talleyrand and Fouché were engaged in extremely suspicious activities.

To bury himself far away from the main centres of communication at this juncture seemed madness. On the contrary, he must get back to them. The operation against the English was on the point of succeeding; Soult could carry it out. Napoleon accordingly placed the command in his hands and went to Valladolid.

But, as soon as his back was turned, efforts all round immediately slackened. Soult contented himself with keeping on the enemy's heels and taking thousands of prisoners, with the result that Moore reached Corunna; he merely stood his ground for a few hours at Lugo, in order to hold his pursuers while the bulk

**Soult Fails  
to Catch  
the English.**

of his forces reached the port. Soult should have strained every nerve to force the position and swoop down on Corunna. But he did not decide to attack until the 16th of January, and even then

did not do so with sufficient vigour and determination. Moore, hard pressed, had meanwhile reached the port, but was shot just as he was superintending the embarkation, which was successfully accomplished, notwithstanding. And on the 18th the British fleet set sail with the remnants of the army at the very moment when Soult was making what was now a futile entry into the deserted town. "If only I had had time to follow the English," Napoleon savagely observed to Roederer, "not a single man jack would have escaped!"

He had arrived in Valladolid on the 6th, hoping to receive more reassuring news. But he was disappointed, and accordingly resolved to return to France. After all, he had grounds for feeling that since he had cleared Spain of some of the English and subdued the insurgent armies, he had accomplished his object. And, on

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the 16th of January, on receipt of further disquieting dispatches, he suddenly left Valladolid and hastened with all speed towards the Pyrenees.

In vain did he inform everybody that the Spanish incident was closed. He knew very well that since he had not completed the work himself all his efforts would have been in vain. On his flank the canker lay open. Everything in that god-forsaken country would become demoralised, fall to bits and go awry.

Fall of  
Saragossa. Lannes shortly afterwards captured Saragossa, but it was only after torrents of blood had been shed. "What a war!" he exclaimed bitterly. "To be obliged to kill so many brave men or even madmen! Victory makes one's heart bleed!"

Napoleon had entered Spain convinced that he was going to settle everything. But as soon as he arrived he became fully aware that the venture which, as he one day confessed, had "begun badly," would continue badly. He was already reckoning up his mistakes without confessing them all even to himself. What other explanation can there be for the words he used, on the 8th of January, in thanking Cambacérès for his New Year's wishes: "I hope the compliment will be repeated for the next thirty years (he was forty at the time), but that will require some little wisdom."

He had been fatally caught in the wheel and already it had become well-nigh impossible for him to be "wise"!

SOURCES. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XVIII. Ducasse, *Correspondance de Joseph*. *Correspondance du Comte de La Forest*, published by G. de Grandmaison, I. Bugeaud, *Lettres*. Memoirs or Reminiscences by General Lejeune, General Thiébault, Captain Routier.

WORKS. Those already mentioned by Masson (*Famille*, IV), and G. de Grandmaison. Thomas (General), *Le Maréchal Lannes*. Ginisty, *Le siège de Saragosse*. Wellington's Despatches, IV. Brialmont, *Histoire du duc de Wellington*.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE FOUCHÉ-TALLEYRAND "CONSPIRACY"

Unhealthy state of public opinion. Events in Rome partly responsible for this. Fouché begins to mistrust the future of the *régime*; the thought of the Emperor's death and the absence of heirs fills him with foreboding. He takes measures to bring about a divorce. He conciliates all parties. The first Malet conspiracy; Fouché declared "to have saved the Senate." Opposition in the Legislative Body. Efforts to supply Napoleon with a successor. Fouché approaches Talleyrand. Their agreement a matter of common knowledge. They turn to Murat. The "conspiracy" revealed to Napoleon. Sudden return of the Master. Violent scene with Talleyrand. Fouché escapes disgrace. War with Austria inevitable. Napoleon raises another army; its weakness. Austria invades Bavaria. The Tsar, forced to support Napoleon, surreptitiously reassures Austria.

**A**S soon as he entered the Tuileries, the Emperor sent for Cambacérès, and made no attempt to conceal his irritation.

The state of public opinion was disquieting. It was that "wretched Spanish business," so people declared in their letters, that from the very beginning had perturbed and eventually alienated the public. In the summer of 1808, people saw that fresh armies would be required to crush the Spaniards. But conscription, which had already been extremely unpopular when it was a matter of providing men to fight the European coalition, became even more odious now that it was to be used to supply armies destined for reducing to submission a nation that had risen up against the foreigner, as the French had done in 1792, and for keeping alive a war that was worse than useless—which was actually detestable. The veterans themselves abominated this war, and from the very beginning, their desperate letters had communicated their loathing to the people at home. Baylen had found men's minds already prepared for panic; there had been a slump on the Bourse, Government securities had fallen ten

Disquieting  
Atmosphere  
in France.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

points, and to prevent a collapse of credit the Treasury had been obliged to throw thirty millions on the market.

The problem of Rome was, moreover, disturbing a certain section of public opinion. The Emperor was now in open conflict

with the Pope, and was already talking of rescinding the Concordat. The fact of the matter was that the situation in Rome itself had become acute; the Curia, exasperated by the high-handed

attitude Napoleon had forced Miollis to adopt, was beginning to extend hostilities from the temporal to the religious sphere. Cardinal Gabrielli, the Papal Secretary of State, had changed his tactics, and was now condemning Bonaparte's religious policy root and branch, declaring that it was entirely animated by indifference towards all religions, an indifference which, since it did not profess any religion, was worse than all the infidel cults. This was an extremely serious counter-offensive—six years after the Concordat—and was launched from a high quarter. When Gabrielli was removed, by order of Miollis, Pacca, his successor, was even less inclined to be amenable. Miollis, although his own brother was a Bishop, became exasperated with the Curia, being of opinion that such a situation could not be prolonged. And as early as October, 1808, it was felt in Rome, as well as in Paris, that the annexation of the Roman States was inevitable in the near future, the Emperor merely having postponed it owing to the Spanish affair. Meanwhile, however, the conflict had been growing more and more embittered, and the Emperor was also beginning to change his ground. His original idea had been merely to aim at the subjection of the head of the Roman States, but he was already showing signs of hostility to certain categories of priests, with the result that others were being alienated. It was quite enough for events in Rome to become known and to be exaggerated abroad for the Catholic communities to feel at least perturbed. And although La Vendée, completely won over by Napoleon's policy, still apparently regarded the conflict with indifference, the Belgian departments were becoming excited, and beginning to raise an agitation, while, in Lyons, a fanatically Catholic town, there were signs of opposition, though, as yet, wavering and uncertain. As a matter of fact, these were mere tremors; the French clergy, and above all the episcopate,

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remained to all appearance unperturbed. It was the "bigoted Catholics" who were becoming alarmed.

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But there was also a certain man who was growing alarmed —a serious matter, for it was no less a personage than the Minister of Police himself, Fouché.

**Fouché  
Perturbed.**

We already know what his policy was, and in spite of seeming inconsistencies, he was true to it. He stood for the preservation of the spirit of the Revolution under the imperial *régime* to which it had given birth. Having more or less succeeded in making it paramount, he had hitherto been whole-heartedly loyal to the system in the establishment of which he had played such an active part in 1804. Far from opposing it, he supported it by quashing or suppressing all the Royalist plots. On the 5th of June, 1808, he had dealt a final blow to the Anglo-Royalist organisation in the West by seizing, together with all his crew, the only dangerous agitator the latter still possessed in the person of Prigent, and shortly afterwards by luring to France and capturing the last agents of the *Comité de Londres*, among others Armand de Chateaubriand, who, in spite of his illustrious cousin's efforts, was shot. And this execution, following upon that of so many fomentors of trouble, really put an end to the constant secret and occasionally dangerous conspiracies which, ever since the death of Cadoudal, had been kept alive in the West by the *Comité de Londres* and the *Agence de Jersey*. In the summer of 1808 the capture of Prigent won Fouché the Emperor's congratulations—a recognition he but rarely bestowed. "It is a most important achievement," wrote the gratified Master on the 11th of June.

But even Fouché was beginning to doubt whether the system he was supporting was destined to last. His uncertainty, however, was based on profounder reasons. He perceived that there were two grave causes for the perpetual instability of the *régime*—constant fresh outbreaks of war and the lack of descendants on the steps of the throne.

**He Doubts  
Whether  
the System  
Will Last.**

For the *régime* war was an even more constant menace than for the country itself; a firmly established dynasty could alone afford fearlessly to run the chance of defeat—which was always



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possible. But, worse still, the Emperor was continually exposing himself in the thick of the fight. And yet Austrian, Prussian and Russian bullets had in the past filled the Minister with less apprehension than what he now referred to as "a guerillero bullet." If the Emperor were killed, what would happen to the Empire which relied entirely upon him?

This menace gave rise to fears of a different category. The new Throne was surrounded by such a bevy of gratitude and affection that, in the last resort, self-interest in some cases and love in others would probably be found to lead those who had supported the father to transfer their allegiance to the son who was flesh of his flesh and spirit of his spirit. But what miracle could secure the birth of this son unless the Emperor consented to a divorce? For a long time Fouché contented himself with hinting at this by means of notes which I have quoted at full length elsewhere. "The English are encouraged in their activities against the Emperor as well as in their refusal to make peace," he wrote once more to Napoleon in 1807, "merely by the knowledge that since he has no children, and consequently no successor, his death, which is possible at any moment, would mean the collapse of the whole Government." Napoleon took no notice of this insinuation, following hard upon scores of others. Whereupon, the Minister made up his mind to take an extraordinarily daring step. On the 28th of November, 1807, in the Emperor's absence, he begged an audience of the Empress, and without beating about the bush,

He implored her to give both to her husband and his  
Approaches régime the most signal proof of devotion that could  
Josephine, possibly be conceived, and herself demand a  
divorce. Josephine was most indignant and vehemently denounced this impudent intervention, which the Emperor also sharply reprimanded. But meanwhile, Fouché continued to spread rumours calculated to encourage a divorce in order to make sure of subsequent support, and enable him on the 21st of May, 1808, to make the following statement: "There is no longer a single individual in France who is not convinced that the preservation and prosperity of the dynasty depend on there being issue of the Emperor's marriage."

But seeing that Napoleon was letting matters take their course, Fouché began to ask himself whether the Emperor's devotion to

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his wife had not made him accept the situation, whereupon his mind turned in a different direction. As, to use his own expression of 1804, Napoleon's brothers still remained "revoltingly incapable," he never for one moment supposed that on the Emperor's death, France would accept one of them as her ruler. But, should occasion arise, the road to the Bourbons must be barred, and perhaps the only man capable of accomplishing this was one of the Generals already in the public eye, some son of the Revolution, a Murat, or a Bernadotte, who, while far inferior both in ability and popularity to a Bonaparte, might, if anything happened to the Emperor, seize the Crown with Fouché's help and carry on the *régime*.

With this object in view, he turned to his own advantage the competition between the last survivors of all the parties; while making himself *persona grata* with the Royalists, although he was paralysing their activities, he **He Conciliates all Parties.** had also improved his position with the malcontents of the Left. The discovery, in June, 1808, by Dubois, the Prefect of Police, of a Republican plot engineered by General Malet, had at first caused him some annoyance, but in the end it had served his purpose. Dubois, **The Malet Conspiracy.** exaggerating the importance of this conspiracy, which as yet existed only in embryo, suspected the Senators Garat, Sieyès, Lanjuinais and some others of being implicated, as well as Marshal Masséna, and even La Fayette. The Emperor, at one moment, thought of bringing the matter before the High Court, but Fouché having reduced this "supposed plot" to its proper proportions, and put Malet under lock and key, had silenced the Master's fears. One of the Senators, an extremely obscure individual named Cornet, wrote that the Minister had "saved the Senate"; others believed it, and Fouché boasted of it in front of the whole House. In the summer of 1808, filled, as I have already described, with the gravest doubts, he was making friends for himself wherever he could, so as to be able to meet any contingency.

He kept an eye on the opposition which, encouraged by the various signs of discontent, seemed to be reviving. The Senate, prevailed upon with the greatest difficulty to vote for fresh levies, was beginning to grow alarmed, and the handful of die-hards in it,

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Garat, Grégoire and Lanjuinais, were obtaining more support than before, though, of course, only in the lobbies. **Increasing Opposition.** And now, lo and behold! the Legislative Body, hitherto so docile, was showing but scant courtesy to Government Bills. The *Code d'Instruction criminelle*, when put to the vote, had almost been thrown out. As a rule the opposition in the Palais Bourbon could not muster more than ten votes out of 280, but when the clauses of this Bill were put to the vote, eighty, and sometimes 100, voted against them. This change of attitude on the part of the Assemblies encouraged Fouché to become more daring.

Moreover, the fear inspired by the risks the Emperor ran was universal. "God forbid that anything should happen to the Emperor!" wrote one fair and devoted Parisian. "One is on tenterhooks the whole time, especially as he doesn't spare himself, but is always a target in his grey riding-coat and, as the soldiers say, is a regular devil." The anxiety of his friends increased the general agitation. Austria was arming, and no sooner had he escaped the precious "guerillero's bullet" than he was once again hurling himself against Austrian bullets, not to mention the daggers which, as Fouché well knew, were being sharpened in Germany! Since he had not secured an heir, steps must be taken; time was pressing. Fouché had matured his plans; he had sought another weapon, and, according to all accounts, had found it.

\* \* \* \* \*

But he was playing for heavy stakes which required strong backing. And he found it, quite unexpectedly, in Talleyrand.

Hitherto, the two men had apparently been irreconcilable enemies. Moreover, everything, as we know, seemed calculated to condemn them to mutual hostility, which arose less from their continual rivalry than from their radically different temperaments. For this reason they were constantly at cross-purposes, doing each other a bad turn at every opportunity and backbiting and snarling at one another. [In 1808 they were regarded as enemies.

But suddenly on the 20th of December, while the Emperor was still in Spain, at one of the brilliant receptions at which Talleyrand

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used to entertain the whole of fashionable and political Paris, the guests were astounded to see the Minister of Police, Fouché who had never before put in an appearance. Approaches The Prince had welcomed the new arrival with Talleyrand. extraordinary affability, had taken him by the arm, and conducted him to his study, where he had ostensibly shut himself up with him. If these two perfect actors had intended to make a sensational gesture, they had succeeded. "We couldn't believe our eyes," said one witness.

The rapprochement between them had already existed for some weeks, and had been brought about by common friends, though, as a matter of fact, since their outlook had become almost identical it was forced on them both. Fouché, as we know, was now almost as doubtful as Talleyrand regarding the stability of the régime and was determined, should it fall, to play a prominent part in its liquidation. But however well he stood with the various parties, he had an uneasy feeling that he was accepted rather than esteemed; but the friendship, however illusory, of such a lofty personage as Talleyrand, would lend him a certain polish; it would free him from his dubious past and almost make him a man of quality. Talleyrand, on the other hand, required the help of this police official whom he had so often insulted in the past. The Prince was no longer a Minister, and his hands were therefore more or less tied, whilst Fouché, who was right in the centre of affairs at home, held all the strings. They had met and probably come to an understanding. Both of them still dreaded the return of the Bourbons as the worst calamity that could possibly befall. Fouché, in the midst of all his splendour, was haunted by his "regicide" vote, while Talleyrand knew that he was, perhaps, even more odious than the regicide himself in Royalist circles. Fouché had to convert Talleyrand to his plan. The most important point was to have at their command some soldier whose name was a talisman, and who had expressed his readiness to step into the Master's shoes as soon as he disappeared from the scene, and thus prevent the Bourbons from seizing the opportunity.

They Turn The man they chose, in December, 1808, was none to Murat. other than Joachim Murat. True, his name would act as a talisman; he was amiable and popular, a son of the people, the idol of the soldiers and the mob.

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As a matter of fact, he was a thorough mediocrity with little depth of intellect ; but for this very reason he would be the more easily led. With Talleyrand to help him in the handling of foreign affairs and Fouché in his domestic policy, he would make a brilliant show as a ruler. Moreover, the essential point was that he should be accepted by the people.

How was it that these two men, usually so cautious and wary, considered it necessary to advertise their agreement ? Confident of success, or, in case of a rebuff, resolved to save each other, they nevertheless quite rightly mistrusted one another, and it was necessary that both should be compromised together. But it was fatal for them to be denounced to the Emperor. Yet this

The  
"Conspiracy"  
Revealed to  
Napoleon,

actually happened; even the eventual candidature of Murat, to which the party most concerned had certainly given his consent, was revealed. And it was the despatches giving the Emperor full details, even more than the news from Austria, that had made him rush back post-haste to Paris.

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Cambacérès felt that the Emperor was more inclined to crush Talleyrand than to dismiss Fouché. Moreover, he affected contempt for a plot which, after all, seemed to aim not so much at overthrowing him as at finding some one to fill his place in case of accident. He was not so anxious to see that mediocrity Joseph step into his shoes ! But he used the plot as an excuse to bring about the downfall of Talleyrand, against whom a host of serious grievances was piling up. Though he was ignorant of his treachery at Erfurt, and destined to remain in ignorance of it, he had, nevertheless, been informed that the Prince was now indulging in machinations against him the perfidy of which infuriated him.

He had been thinking matters over. From the Duc d'Enghien's case to the Spanish business, this man, to whom he had been only too ready to listen, had always encouraged him to make disastrous resolutions, and now this "wretch," this "robber," whose scandalous acquisitions he had tolerated, this "traitor to his God and King," in order to wriggle out of responsibilities he had incurred, was actually maintaining that, far from having advised these ill-omened measures, he had "disapproved" of them. In

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order to ruin him, the scoundrel was making use of the very acts which he himself had been the first to suggest. This disgusted the Emperor even more than his hobnobbing with Fouché; moreover, an only too justifiable suspicion was dawning on his mind that the Prince was betraying him right and left.

Apparently, he wished, before he did anything else, to come to some understanding with Fouché, to whom he intended merely to give a serious warning. He valued the services which the Minister of Police was constantly rendering to the *régime*, and, moreover, understood his motives. Obviously, he did not desire the downfall of the established system. And, precisely because public opinion was somewhat perturbed, he still seemed useful; he was skilful as well as firm. The Emperor contented himself with taking him to task on the subject of his interviews with Talleyrand and threatening him with dismissal. Fouché, completely unperturbed, exonerated himself, declaring that the only object he had in view was the consolidation and safety of the *régime*. He more or less carried his point, and the Emperor pretended to be satisfied. It was the other man whom he wished to crush, and to give the matter full publicity. A dramatic execution of this kind would terrify the various sets of intriguers. The scene was destined to play such an important part in the history of the Empire that we must linger over it for a moment.

It was at the end of a council held on the day after his return, and to which Talleyrand had been summoned, that the thunderbolt fell. During the meeting the Emperor had contented himself with complaining bitterly of the fact that during his absence public opinion had been allowed to be undermined; he denounced the manœuvres which had brought about a slump on the Bourse, expressed his disapproval of the attitude of the Legislative Body and of the intrigues fostered in the salons. Everything seemed over, and the meeting was just breaking up. Talleyrand was

standing leaning against the mantelpiece looking absolutely unperturbed when suddenly Napoleon walked straight up to him and began to take him to task, telling him that he knew all about his infamous machinations and demanding to know his reasons. "The Duc d'Enghien," he exclaimed furiously, "the Duc

**Napoleon Warns Fouché.**

**Violent Scene with Talleyrand.**

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

d'Enghien ! You have dared to maintain, sir, that you knew nothing whatever about his death ! You have dared to maintain that you knew nothing whatever about the Spanish war ! What ! You knew nothing about the death of the Duc d'Enghien ! You ! Have you forgotten that you advised me in writing to have him executed ? You knew nothing about the Spanish war ! Have you forgotten that in your letters you advised me to revive the policy of Louis XIV ? Have you forgotten that you were the intermediary for all the negotiations which resulted in the present war ? " And, striding up and down, but always returning to his unfortunate victim, and almost shaking his fist in his face, he added the most outrageous accusations to his legitimate reproaches, accusing him of various acts of treachery in the past, of felonies, embezzlement and robbery. Then, for a moment including Fouché in the same sweeping gaze, he exclaimed, " Understand this, that if a revolution should break out, no matter what part you had played in it, you would be the first to be crushed ! " Whereupon, amid the silent consternation of the fifteen witnesses, he left the room. The Prince had remained to all appearance as cold as an iceberg ; not once had his eyes shot fire. As soon as the Emperor's back was turned he too made his way, with his usual limp, towards the door, and with supreme composure, not unmingled with contempt, uttered his famous remark : " What a pity that so great a man should have such bad manners ! " But when he reached home he was obliged

Fall of  
Talleyrand. to take to his bed. On the following day the Emperor deprived him of the lucrative functions of Grand Chamberlain. From that moment all was over, and Talleyrand, who had been an unreliable servant for many years, and for some months a traitor to his Sovereign, now became the mortal enemy of the Great Man. He knew how to make a pretence of forgetting and again making himself welcome, but he did so only in order to be at headquarters, and thus be in a better position to act the traitor.

Paris believed that Fouché was also involved in the dramatic downfall of his " accomplice." In addition to many friends, he also had many enemies, more especially in the Government offices and at Court, and a virulent campaign was organised against him. We have already had occasion to follow it through the medium

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of the notes which, in his pointed handwriting, Fouché attached to the police bulletins sent to the Master, and in which, endeavouring to justify himself, he not only used the cleverest arguments in defence of his actions, but also, with a view to demolishing his enemies, launched a cruel counter-offensive against those who were constantly attacking him. For the time being he was giving himself unnecessary trouble ; we know the Emperor's reasons for not wishing to dismiss him. The growing menace of war with

**Fouché  
Escapes  
Disgrace.**

Austria would have been quite sufficient to make Napoleon recoil from the idea of depriving himself, on the eve of what might prove a most critical period, of the services of a Minister who, though doubtless unreliable, was nevertheless firm and alert.

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War with Austria had become inevitable because Austria herself now desired it. "The Army is devouring the State,"

**War with  
Austria  
Inevitable.**

wrote Francis II, alarmed by the financial consequences of the new military organisation. Austria had reached one of those critical points when a country must either disarm or fight. Moreover, public opinion expressed itself with a decision it had never before shown on the eve of former conflicts. "In 1805," wrote the French Chargé d'Affaires, "it was the Government that was involved in the war, but not the Army and the people. In 1809 it was desired alike by the Government, the Army and the people." The wise counsels of Metternich were no longer heeded ; Stadion, the Chancellor, was cherishing the highest hopes ; and it was no longer to the salons of Europe, but to the people that all eyes were turned. In Germany, above all, did Vienna place her trust. And Austrian, not to mention Prussian, agents were already busy fomenting disturbances in the troubled atmosphere of that country. Stein, who had been dismissed on Napoleon's orders by the King of Prussia, was the prime instigator. Austria had agents everywhere ; even in France herself Metternich was carrying on secret intrigues. The Russian Chancellor, Romanzoff, who was in Paris at the time, wrote on the 24th of January that Austria was "undermining" Napoleon.

But Napoleon had no intention of allowing himself to be



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"undermined." In any case he hoped to be able to counter-mine the enemy, and was still relying on the Russian alliance to help him to do so.

Immediately after Erfurt he had expected Alexander to adopt a threatening attitude towards London as well as towards Vienna. Two messengers, one French and the other Russian, had been sent to London with offers of peace backed by the ultimatum already mentioned. But never had England been less inclined to make peace. True, the Blockade harassed her considerably, but there were still too many gaps in the wall raised against her goods for her not to find some outlets for her trade. But unwilling to place their great adversary in an advantageous position by giving a categorical refusal, the British Government insisted, as a preliminary to the opening of any negotiations, that the Spanish insurgents should be represented. London was perfectly well aware that the very suggestion, which was heinous, would lead to Napoleon refusing all further parley. And such indeed was the case.

England's attitude was partly dictated by the knowledge that the Continent, owing to the machinations of Vienna, would soon be ablaze again. The Emperor was inclined to lay the blame for this on the Tsar; if he had adopted a firmer tone towards Austria, the latter, he thought, would have disarmed. But Alexander constantly confined himself to mere "counsels of prudence," and even these were so ambiguous that before long Vienna felt justified in cherishing the highest hopes, even from the direction of St. Petersburg. If the Tsar was urging Austria not to declare her hand, it was because he wished her to hold herself in reserve. "The hour of vengeance would one day strike!" Napoleon was well aware that to count on this "ally" in case of war was a delusion and a snare. He therefore prepared his

Napoleon  
Raises a  
New Army.

own army. The German Princes of the Confederation would supply him with 100,000 men.

But as the Grand Army was fighting in Spain, it was necessary for him rapidly to raise another "grand army." He would take 100,000 conscripts and mix them with the few corps which, after October, 1808, had been left in Germany under Davout and with one or two veteran divisions brought back from Spain—a total of 110,000 veterans, thus making an army of

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210,000 Frenchmen, supplemented by 100,000 Germans. He raised a similar army for Eugene, menaced in Italy by an Austrian invasion—72,000 French soldiers augmented by a contingent of 20,000 Italians.

Austria, meanwhile, was completing her preparations for war. An unusual feeling of pride and excitement filled the air; the

**Austria Prepares for War.** Army seemed to be the first to be raised aloft on a wave of patriotism and the Chancellery strained every nerve to raise allies in all directions. Mean-

while the Headquarters Staff were exultantly planning their campaign. Austria had about 300,000 men at her disposal; 200,000 under the Archduke Charles were hastening, through Bavaria, towards the Rhine, rousing Germany on the way; 100,000 were to reconquer Italy. On the 2nd of March Metternich informed Châmpagny that the attitude of the Emperor of the French and the movements of troops in Germany were regarded by Austria in the light of provocation, and that she considered herself justified in putting her own forces on a war footing. On the 4th of March Napoleon gave his final instructions to the Marshals. In Germany three huge corps were ready to take action under Davout, Masséna, and Lannes, the three greatest soldiers of the Empire. Bessières was to command the cavalry—15,000 men. The Guard, 20,000 strong, were to remain under the Emperor's orders. Lefebvre, Augereau and Bernadotte were to assume command of the German contingents. The whole was to constitute the new Army of Germany.

This force was very far from being the Grand Army of 1805 and 1806. The latter, alas! was wearing itself out in Spain.

**Weakness of Napoleon's New Army.** The Army that had just been formed suffered from a twofold weakness: in the first place it contained too large a proportion of foreign soldiers who adulterated rather than strengthened it; secondly,

the conscripts were young and inexperienced. Furthermore, the veterans who constituted the backbone had at their head only one or two of the leaders under whom they had once marched out to win their glorious victories. Ney and Soult, not to mention Mortier, Victor and many others, were still in Spain, while Murat, now a King whose lofty position bound him to the coast of Naples, was no longer there to command the cavalry. True, Davout,

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Lannes and Masséna were incomparable leaders ; but they, for their part, no longer had quite the men of the great campaigns under their command. However, at the head of the French Army stood the leader, who was worth a hundred thousand men, and that was enough to guarantee the future. In his hands the worst army would become a fine force. Moreover, the young recruits, when once, with a stiffening of seasoned veterans, they had received their baptism of fire, would in a few weeks become hardened and would in the end surprise their seniors.

It can well be understood, however, that Metternich, and with him the Vienna Chancellery, should have been mistaken in their estimate. On the 12th of April Austria signed an alliance with England, in which the latter played her usual part of providing subsidies, and on the 14th, without making a declaration of war, the Archduke Charles crossed the Inn and entered Bavaria, while a quiver of excitement ran through Germany.

Napoleon had been waiting. He required an outstanding proof that this time he had not been the aggressor. This was necessary on account of St. Petersburg ; for, by the terms of the alliance, the Tsar in such circumstances was formally bound to support France. And indeed the latter declared, in the presence of Schwarzenberg, who had been dispatched from Vienna, that he was obliged to carry out the terms of the treaty. But as a matter of fact, as he dismissed the Austrian General, he added that "although he found himself on the opposite side, he could not help hoping that Austria would succeed." And this time he was sincere.

The consequence was that Napoleon had never before trod such dangerous ground. With soldiers hardly yet licked into shape, and the majority of whom were facing fire for the first time, he was hastening to confront an army which had been taught the art of war in his own school. England was keeping a sharp look-out on the coast, upon which she would make a descent as soon as the Emperor was occupied on the Danube. Spain was wearing out the French forces, who were flaying without subduing her. In Italy certain elements were waiting for the first rebuff in order, behind the backs of their priests, to embrace the cause of the downtrodden Pope. Germany was full of rebel bands, secretly

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encouraged by Prussia, while the Tyrolese mountaineers had risen in revolt and created a "miniature Spain" on the flank of the Army of Germany. The Russian ally, on whom the Emperor had relied, was already wavering and, doubly treacherous, had actually conveyed to the enemy that his attitude was not unfriendly. Lastly, before leaving Paris, Metternich had taken care to sow the usual seeds of treachery.

The Tsar's  
Duplicity.

Nevertheless, when, on the 13th of April, the Emperor suddenly appeared before the Tuileries in his post-chaise, he looked as radiant as he had done during his early campaigns. "In two months I shall have forced Austria to disarm," he declared. "After which I shall go to Spain if necessary." And already obsessed by these brilliant prospects, he was putting his fears behind him.

Napoleon  
Confident.

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## CHAPTER XXXI

### ECKMÜHL AND ESSLING

The Archduke Charles in Bavaria. He comes up against the French. Victorious engagements at Eckmühl. Capture of Ratisbon. Eugene, repulsed in Italy, takes the offensive and marches against Austria. The Emperor enters Vienna. The Archduke takes up his position on the heights above the left bank of the Danube. The Emperor prepares to cross the river. The island of Lobau. The Archduke allows the enemy to approach. Fierce fighting in the plain between Essling and Aspern. Lannes attacks the heights, but is ordered by the Emperor to stop. Destruction of the great bridge. Napoleon orders a retreat. Lannes killed. Masséna covers the retreat. The French reverse exaggerated by the Austrians. The impression produced upon Europe. Schill endeavours to rouse Germany. Equivocal attitude and inertia of the Tsar. Spain; the insubordination of the leaders prevents the termination of the campaign. Soult driven out of Portugal by Wellesley. Germany perturbed. The only steps taken by the Tsar in Galicia directed against the Polish allies of France. Paris extremely agitated. Disturbances in the West. Fouché and public opinion. Certain traitors encourage an English landing. Everything depends on one battle.

**T**HE Archduke Charles, without making any declaration of war, had crossed the Inn between the 10th and the 13th of April, and on the 15th, 16th and 17th his troops were marching towards Ratisbon.

For the first time Napoleon seemed to have been caught napping. His troops were ready, but they were not linked up. Between the two masses of French troops under Davout and Masséna, forming the two wings of the imperial army, the centre consisted entirely of 50,000 Germans, in whom but little reliance could be placed.

Making with all speed for the Ratisbon-Ingolstadt line, the Archduke had hoped to drive back or break through this weak centre, separate Davout from Masséna, and defeat first one and then the other, all of which was to be done before Napoleon had arrived in Germany, and while the army was still in the less capable hands of Major-General Berthier. The Archduke saw himself on

The Archduke  
Charles in  
Bavaria.

## ECKMÜHL AND ESSLING

the Rhine before three weeks had passed.

As he met with no resistance on the Inn, he had every reason to think himself extraordinarily lucky, and he made preparations to advance along the Eckmühl road and attack Davout in the neighbourhood of Ratisbon.

But Napoleon, having crossed France post-haste, had reached Stuttgart *via* Strasbourg on the 16th. On the 17th he arrived in Donauwörth, and took command of the battle.

Napoleon  
Takes  
Command. Having instructed his lieutenants to concentrate round Abensberg, between Ratisbon and Ingolstadt, he himself was on the spot on the 18th.

The concentration was immediately carried out, and the Archduke was destined to be confronted by an army now firmly linked together and to be faced from the outset with its crack corps—the one under Davout. At the first encounter, which took place at Tengen, the Austrians, though superior in numbers, gave way before the courageous onslaught of these veterans. Napoleon, who had reached the plateau of Abensberg, seeing the enemy shaken by this preliminary reverse, felt that he would not resist a strong thrust. He accordingly took some of Davout's troops, and placing them in the centre under the command of the impetuous Lannes, ordered the latter to attack. Lannes did all the Emperor expected of him, and having broken the Austrian centre, he drove the enemy back in disorder on to Rohr, inflicting severe losses. During the few days of fighting at Abensberg, the Archduke had already lost between 13,000 and 14,000 men and had been considerably weakened.

Concluding that, in order to join up with his left, the Prince would endeavour to regain the Isar in the direction of Landshut, Napoleon made up his mind to attack him while he was on the move. He entrusted the command of this operation to Masséna, who had been hurled on to Landshut on the 20th; Davout was to confine himself to marching against the troops which had already suffered a reverse at Tengen and the strength of which had been under-estimated. Truth to tell, as had been the case at Auerstädt, the Marshal was to find himself faced by the enemy's main body. It was his fate, and was to make his name glorious for all time. The Archduke was in command of the Eckmühl road, by which he was to return to Ratisbon. Relying on the

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

superiority of his forces, he still hoped to defeat Davout and thus turn the French centre, which had been victorious on the previous day.

A happy inspiration had made Napoleon strengthen Davout's corps on the 21st. Nevertheless, he thought that the main Austrian defence was concentrated to the rear of Landshut, and he went to join Lannes, who was entrusted with the task of defeating it. But during the first few hours of the engagement he discovered his mistake; the main Austrian army and its leader were on his left. Master of Landshut and thus cutting off the Archduke's retreat on the side of the Isar, the Emperor made up his mind to advance in a northerly direction after him, and since Ratisbon would have to be taken, to force the road leading to it

**Battle of  
Eckmühl.** at Eckmühl. He accordingly hurled all his forces in that direction. On the morning of the 22nd the plateau of Eckmühl was attacked, and after a number of successful engagements and various vicissitudes, the slopes were seized. Eventually Gudin's division captured the heights, while Bessières' cavalry completed the task of driving out the Austrians.

Driven back on to the plain of Ratisbon, the latter endeavoured to re-form there. But seizing the opportunity, the Emperor collected a formidable body of cavalry—the ten regiments of cuirassiers under Nansouty and Saint-Sulpice—and hurled them on to the plain. In less than an hour the remnants of the enemy's army were seeking refuge in the town, where Napoleon expected to reach them on the following day. The Archduke, feeling that retaliation was out of the question, crossed the Danube and beat a hasty retreat to Bohemia, thus leaving the road to Vienna open.

Before advancing along it, Napoleon decided to capture Ratisbon, and Lannes took it by storm. While the Emperor

**Ratisbon  
Captured.** was watching this brilliant feat of arms, he was hit in the foot by a bullet which was supposed to be "dead." In order to reassure the horrified

soldiers, he had the wound dressed and immediately mounted his horse again. An hour later he entered the town amid the enthusiastic cheers of the troops. In five days the imperial armies had made complete havoc of all the Archduke's plans. During the course of the four engagements known as the Battle of Eckmühl,

## ECKMÜHL AND ESSLING

the latter had lost 60,000 men and vast quantities of material. The victory not only allowed Napoleon to enter the hereditary States, but also resulted in setting Eugene free in Italy where, in the meantime, the latter had suffered a somewhat grave reverse.

The French had allowed themselves to be surprised here just as they had done in Germany. The Archduke John had suddenly swooped down on the country, and Prince Eugene, who had gone out to meet him, had been defeated at Sacile on the 10th of April, and had, in consequence, been obliged to retire behind the Adige.

But Napoleon had already ordered Macdonald to join the Prince. A good sound soldier of the Revolution and a vigorous leader, Macdonald had immediately reorganised the Viceroy's army and it was ready to take the offensive again when the Battle of Eckmühl intervened and, by forcing the Austrian Government to recall its troops to the neighbourhood of Vienna, released the tension on Prince Eugene and liberated Italy. The victory also freed the Emperor from a heavy load of anxiety, compared with which the uprising in the Tyrol under the rough and impetuous

Andreas Hofer seemed of little account. Neither did the Emperor attach much weight to the movements which he was informed were taking place in Germany, where the Prussian Major Schill and the ex-Duke of Brunswick-Oels were endeavouring to kindle a little guerilla war of their own, nor even to the temporary invasion of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw by the Archduke Ferdinand. He was hastening to Vienna in order to strike a blow at the very heart of Austria and everything else had become of secondary importance.

\* \* \* \* \*

As early as the 14th of April, Masséna, descending the Danube on the left bank, arrived at Linz, where the Emperor joined him. After a short but murderous engagement at Ebersberg on the 3rd of May, the road to Vienna was opened up, and on the 8th the French were at St. Polten, a suburb of the city. On the same day the Emperor installed himself once again at Schönbrunn, where, for the second time, the French eagle surmounted the



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national colours and took the place of the double-headed eagle of the Habsburgs. On the 13th of May Vienna, abandoned by Archduke Maximilian's troops, capitulated, and Napoleon made his entry. But it could not be followed by such results as the luck and daring of Lannes and Murat had secured to his previous entry in 1805. The Austrians had been able to destroy the bridges, with the result that, in order to follow the enemy's army, the French had to cross the huge river, which, now that it was deprived of its bridges, made any immediate operation extremely hazardous.

The Archduke Charles had, as a matter of fact, made a wide circuit and reached the left bank in the neighbourhood of Vienna.

Under cover of the Danube he hoped to reorganise his army, which would soon be reinforced by the troops under his brother John, who was hastening back from Italy. This was precisely what Napoleon wished to prevent by a sudden attack. Moreover, if a month were allowed to pass without a battle being fought, the revolts which seemed to be simmering throughout Europe would spread and perhaps break out. An immediate decisive victory, the thunderbolt so dear to Napoleon's heart, would put everything right.

The main difficulty that confronted him was the river. It was nearly 3,000 feet broad and almost under the enemy's eye; he would have to get 150,000 men and 800 guns across.

The Island of Lobau. It seemed a mad venture; but the crossing of the Saint Bernard had also once seemed impossible.

Down-stream from Vienna the large island of Lobau stands in the middle of the Danube. The stream between it and the right bank is very wide—2,100 feet—but if a footing could be gained on the island, which was covered with trees, the crossing of the other arm of the river, which is much narrower, would be child's play. It was merely a matter of making a bridge of boats across the former. As a matter of fact, the current at this season of the year was very strong, and hardly had the bridge been constructed than it was menaced with being washed away. But the Emperor himself devised a method which he thought would secure it. On the 17th of May the bridge was finished and Lobau rendered accessible. None the less, the attack still remained a hazardous

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though by no means mad venture. The troops crossed over to Lobau without mishap, and a second bridge was immediately built across the other arm. No sooner was it ready than Lasalle's cavalry division hurled itself on to the left bank. The left bank, which is fairly low, merges into the Marchfeld, a plain which between the two villages of Aspern and Essling is intersected by a channel, once a branch of the river. From this channel it rises to the foot of some low hills, on which the villages of Wagram and Neusiedel are situated. It was on these heights that the Archduke had taken up his position. It is strange that, overlooking the river and the island of Lobau as he did, he should have done nothing to prevent the crossing, and should even have omitted to occupy Aspern and Essling. The two villages were immediately seized, the one by Masséna and the other by Lannes, while Bessières' cavalry constituted a strong line of communication between them. But the Archduke was of opinion that Napoleon's move, which he regarded as quite mad, would deliver up his enemy into his hands. Before the French army could be reinforced, he would suddenly launch a violent counter-attack and hurl it back on the Danube, where by means of an enveloping movement he would bring it to bay and force it to capitulate. As soon as he knew that the villages in the Marchfeld had been occupied, he deployed his wings, which were to take the two apparently extremely foolhardy corps in the rear.

Napoleon followed this manœuvre with a certain satisfaction. The Archduke was depleting his centre, and it was precisely here that he wished to strike. When he had broken it, the two wings, cut off from one another, would be at his mercy and, hurled back on the river, would be caught between it and the victorious

French forces. But he intended to strike his great blow only when all his troops had crossed the two bridges. Meanwhile the important point was to hold the two Austrian wings by vigorously disputing possession of Aspern and Essling with them. When, in order to intercept communication between Lannes and Davout, the Archduke hurled his cavalry on to the Marchfeld, the liaison was restored by Nansouty's cavalry, though only after the most sanguinary losses. The Austrian army, now considerably weakened, seemed disinclined to make any counter-movement

Fierce Fighting at Essling and Aspern.

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during the night of the 21st to the 22nd. Meanwhile the French forces were continually increasing, though, as a matter of fact, by dawn of the 22nd it had not been possible to get the whole army over on to the island. Davout's first divisions were just beginning to cross the great bridge, which had fortunately managed to survive the rude buffetings it received from the floating objects sent down-stream by the Austrians.

On the morning of the 22nd the French were still in possession of Aspern and Essling. Masséna's instructions were to confine himself to holding the former, but Lannes, installed in the latter, was now ordered to strike at the Austrian centre. Davout, whose

**Lannes  
Attacks the  
Heights.**

arrival was expected, was to reinforce him with his fresh regiments, and they would thus be able to carry all before them. Three of his divisions were already taking up their positions on the field.

Lannes rushed his men forward, with the result Napoleon expected—before an hour had passed the Austrian centre had been broken and fell back in considerable disorder. The Archduke made vain efforts to rally his troops; Lannes, pursuing his advantage, was already entering Breitenlee, half-way up the slope, and under the irresistible impetus of his attack the Austrians were still retreating towards their line of departure—Wagram-Neusiedel. The Marshal, who till now had been content to bring only moderate pressure to bear on the enemy centre, now determined to clinch matters; and he sent Bessières' cavalry against the already disorganised Austrian troops. The Archduke was beginning to see that his army was in a most perilous position when, suddenly to their stupefaction, the Austrians found that both infantry and cavalry were slowing down in their attack, which before long came to a complete standstill.

The great bridge had at last given way and broken in two! Six regiments of cuirassiers, Davout's two last divisions and, worse still, the wagons bringing up fresh supplies of ammunition, were still on the other side. The accident was all the more serious seeing that the battle had already consumed an unexpected and unprecedented amount of munitions, with the result that before many more hours had passed the guns would perforce be silenced.

The Emperor, on being informed of this serious mishap, did

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not hesitate a moment. He was a fine player ; feeling that for the time being the game was obviously lost, he knew that it was better to stop than to risk disaster. He therefore ordered Lannes, who before long would be left in " mid-air," to halt and fall back on Essling. But the Archduke was not the man to allow this opportunity to slip. He hurled his troops forward, while his artillery opened a cruel fire on the French as they slowly retreated. Lannes had taken his place in the centre of his troops, and had just brought them to a halt at the channel across the Marchfeld when he was hit by a bullet, which shattered both his thighs and killed him. This tragic incident, however, did not weaken the resistance which his men now put up behind the old river-bed against the foe, who had returned to the onslaught. But they were in considerable danger of being either cut to pieces or else outflanked, for the Austrians were attacking the exhausted French troops in both Aspern and Essling. But they, too, resisted with a fierce determination which repulsed all assaults. In view of the enormous losses he had suffered, the Archduke despaired of ever being able to get the better of these desperadoes ; and he called a halt, fearing that a counter-attack might still be made which his soldiers, now at the end of their tether, might not resist. Napoleon, as the result of an accident that could not be remedied, had lost the battle ; but the Archduke had not won it.

Meanwhile, on the bank of the Danube, the Emperor was holding a hurried council of war with his Marshals. Some of them, too ready to throw up the sponge, insisted that the whole army should fall back on Vienna and even on Ratisbon. But Napoleon was far from agreeing. The game could shortly be resumed, but only on one condition—that the precious base provided by the island of Lobau should not be lost. The army could retire there, partly for the purpose of recuperating, while awaiting reinforcements from France, Italy and Germany. The French had lost 10,000 men, but the Emperor calculated that the enemy had lost even more heavily. To retreat on Vienna would have meant acknowledging defeat. Masséna, on being consulted, supported the Emperor's arguments. And, admirable soldier that he

**Napoleon  
Orders a  
Retreat.**

**Lannes Killed.**

**Masséna  
Covers the  
Retreat.**

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

was, he consented to organise the retreat on to the island of the troops that had remained on the left bank. Whereupon, behold the moving spectacle of the illustrious Duc de Rivoli running the risk of capture rather than cross the river before his men. and the veteran Marshal setting foot on the little bridge only when the last trooper was already on it. Napoleon immortalised the conduct of the "old lion of Rivoli" on that day by bestowing upon him the title of Prince of Essling.

By dawn on the 23rd the army was installed on the island. Napoleon had left 16,000 men on the field of battle, but the Archduke had lost nearly 27,000. On the following day the great bridge which had given way was mended. Thus it was in full security that the French could await the opportunity for taking their revenge on the self-same field.

\* \* \* \* \*

But the effect produced in Europe by this tragic day may well be imagined. This battle, ending in the abandonment of the field after a futile butchery, constituted a rebuff which was serious in a different way from that of Eylau, which, fourteen months previously, had almost shaken the prestige of the Emperor and the stability of the Empire.

Naturally Austria loudly proclaimed her victory and shouted her triumph to the four winds. The Archduke Charles sent a bombastic report to Francis II: "Napoleon is in full retreat on the other side of the river. We are pursuing him!" Hostile agents circularised Europe with the lying bulletin: "The Battle of Vienna was fought on the 23rd of May," it announced. "The Emperor Napoleon must be among the host of prisoners. . . . Twenty-five Generals have been captured, among them Davout, Augereau and Lefebvre. Masséna, cut off with his army corps of 20,000 men, is surrounded on the Danube; he is on the point of capitulating."

These extravagant tidings fell upon the ears of a Europe which, for the last three months, had been a powder-magazine. The most terrible explosions were therefore to be feared. Germany, more particularly, had been in a state of feverish excitement for weeks. From professors to pastors, everybody for the last two

**Impression  
Produced on  
Europe.**

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months had been preaching a Holy War. Every desk and pulpit became a rostrum ; scientists abandoned their laboratories, writers their studies ; one and all called upon Germany to be born again in the blood of the oppressor. Brunswick-Oels, at the head of the Westphalian peasants, was threatening to kidnap Jerome from Cassel. Goltz was urging the King of Prussia to rouse himself from his attitude of humiliation. And suddenly Major Schill,

**Schill Tries to Rouse Germany.** together with all the Berlin cavalry, deserted the Prussian army and hurled himself into the thick of the fight. Eckmühl barely sufficed to cool his ardour. The Prussian Court consulted the Tsar, but he merely preached "patience." And all this had happened before Essling !

Alexander was still proving the most unreliable ally. He had massed troops on the Galician frontier, but had not allowed them to stir. The attitude of the Poles of Galicia who, **The Tsar's Duplicity.** at that time under the yoke of Austria, were obviously longing to be united to the Grand Duchy

of Warsaw, alarmed him to the point of exasperation. And he had secretly rejoiced at the entry of the Austrians into the Grand Duchy, and had not lifted a finger to prevent it, declaring that before taking action he wished to have further assurances from Napoleon that he would never create a new Kingdom of Poland. Meanwhile his troops remained inactive. Napoleon was annoyed. "Russia is hardly an ally," he remarked on the 4th of June to Savary. And referring to the monarchs of Europe, he added : "They have all agreed to meet at my tomb, but dare not turn up."

At the other end of Europe the open wound represented by Spain had become terribly inflamed and swollen since the Emperor's departure. The military leaders, **Chaos in Spain.** profiting by the successes he had won, had at first seemed on the point of crushing the various efforts

at resistance. Joseph had been reinstated in Madrid, and Napoleon had left him Soult, Ney, Victor, Suchet and Mortier, together with a force of 300,000 excellent men, with whom Soult was to reconquer Portugal, Victor to subdue Andalusia, Mortier and Suchet to pacify Aragon, Ney Galicia, and Gouvion-Saint-Cyr Catalonia. But the Marshals, refusing to submit to Joseph, whose behaviour was indeed extremely stupid, immediately

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showed signs of wishing to be miniature satraps, independent rulers; whence arose a state of military and political anarchy provocative of the worst dangers. At the beginning of March Victor, completely paralysed, had not yet lifted a finger in Andalusia, where the one regular army in Spain was stationed in the neighbourhood of the Junta. Soult had marched on Portugal and having won a signal success at Oporto, had set himself up there as master. Whereupon Victor decided to go to Seville and crush the Junta which had sought refuge there. At Medellin he had defeated the Spaniards. Meanwhile Soult, intoxicated by his victory and elated by the position of proconsul which he had assumed, had so completely lost his head that, without the consent of the Emperor, he had had himself proclaimed King of Portugal with the title of Nicholas I. This sheds a fierce light on the state of mind and the conscience of the great soldiers who were allowing themselves to deteriorate in this way. And while Soult was

**Soult Driven  
out of  
Portugal.**

letting himself go for a moment, and becoming involved in intrigues, Wellesley had taken Oporto by surprise, and on the 11th of May had driven out the luckless "King Nicholas," had hunted him out of his "Kingdom" of a day and made him beat an almost disorderly retreat from the other side of the Serra de Santa Catalina into the Asturias. Here Soult had fallen in with Ney, and at first the two had agreed as to the necessity of taking common action. But, as the result of deplorable incidents, they had come to loggerheads, all of which had led to such a scandalous state of affairs that Joseph, feeling his rear was insecure, stopped Victor from advancing on Seville.

As a matter of fact, the King in Madrid had adopted an attitude but little calculated to make the French Generals, who were

**Joseph's  
Behaviour.**

already inclined to be most insolent and insubordinate, rally round him. He wished to play the part of King of Spain as though he had been born to the position, absurdly maintaining that it was only the overbearing violence of the "foreign" occupation that prevented "his subjects from expressing their devotion to him." And yet he was perfectly ready to accuse Napoleon of treachery if he withdrew a single regiment from Spain, and to threaten "abdication." On the eve of Essling the Emperor gave vent to his exasperation

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at this conduct, but contented himself with writing and telling his pitiable senior that affairs in Spain were going badly. They were, indeed, going extremely badly when, suddenly, the news of Essling aggravated the situation still further.

It ran like wildfire through the whole of Europe and produced a most dangerous state of excitement.

A prolonged cry of hope could be heard through the length and breadth of Germany. Brunswick-Oels plucked up courage and

**Germany**                      hurled himself and his bands on Westphalia, where  
**Roused.**                      Jerome, terrified out of his wits, immediately called

out frantically for help and spread panic even as far as Paris. Fortunately Schill, whose insolence and daring had

also risen by leaps and bounds, allowed himself to be captured ; he was immediately executed and his death provided a salutary

warning. Austria had made overtures to the King of Prussia. But Jena was still too close. "Let Austria win one more victory,"

said Frederick William to Steigentesch, the Viennese envoy, "and I am with you." By an ironic turn of fortune's wheel Austria,

Mr Essling, received a reply couched in the very words she had herself used in refusing Russia's appeals after Eylau.

Meanwhile the Tsar adopted a sphinx-like and expectant attitude. On receiving the news of Essling he made a pretence of

condoning with Caulaincourt. Shortly afterwards  
**The Tsar**                      he heard that the Poles under Poniatowski had  
**and Poland.**                      just entered Galicia. He immediately sent his

army there, but his object was to hamper the activities of the Grand-ducal troops or filch from them the fruits of their success.

"The act of a traitor !" was Napoleon's comment.

As a matter of fact, the whole of Europe was in a state of ferment. In Italy, where the "usurpation" had been consummated in Rome, the priests interpreted Essling as a visitation

from Heaven. England was doing all she could to speed up the preparations for a descent on the coast of Flanders and Holland,

convinced that as soon as her red-coats appeared the whole of these regions, as far as the banks of the Rhine,

**Paris**                              would rise up in rebellion. She hoped to find  
**Agitated.**                      support even in Paris, where everything was

anxiety and intrigue.

Ever since the Emperor's departure, Paris had been in a



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terrible state of agitation. Even if he were invincible, would he always be invulnerable? Whereupon the news had been circulated that, although he had been victorious at Eckmühl, he had been wounded before Ratisbon. The thrill of horror experienced by those about him was expressed by the volatile Pauline in extremely exaggerated terms. "If he were to be killed," she exclaimed, "where would all of us be? We should be massacred!" The news of his "wound" had completely outweighed the beneficial results of his victories in Bavaria. Everybody was of the same opinion as a certain Customs officer who, having ventured to Leghorn, wrote on the eve of Essling: "Our welfare hangs on defeat or victory in a single battle. One defeat and every bone in our bodies will be broken." Then, suddenly, the news that a battle had been lost burst upon the world!

Friends were convulsed with grief and enemies had their fill of gloating. "People are tired and discontented," wrote Barras, doubtless with a malicious smile. "All we want is a single reverse to change the whole state of affairs." The reverse had taken place, and Barras and all the embittered Jacobins indulged in base exultation.

The Bourse, which for months past had been fluctuating, suddenly slumped. "A stock exchange gamble," wrote Napoleon to Fouché, "which compromises the public peace."

It was, as usual, in Royalist quarters, above all, that the news of a rebuff was hailed with joy. But the fact that the Faubourg Saint Germain triumphantly proclaimed that the "usurper" was

lost did not perturb Fouché nearly so much as the knowledge that the West, which for the last few months he had regarded as having been definitely pacified, was once more beginning to show signs of restlessness.

A widespread spirit of uneasiness was reported in Anjou and Brittany, and the Minister prepared to take repressive measures. General Henry, an able and energetic *gendarme*, placed under the direct command of the Ministry of General Police, organised under Fouché's supervision a strong body of men, who scoured all the villages in five departments, hunted out all the old Royalist subordinates who might have furnished cadres for an "insurrection," which, wrote Marshal Moncey, but for this

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precaution " might have been serious."

If Fouché displayed the utmost zeal, it was only to hide his own anxiety. The precarious nature of a *régime*, which was entirely at the mercy of more serious incidents, became every day more apparent to him. And he took care to keep on good terms with members of all parties, still adhering to his idea of 1808, that in case of disaster or death overtaking the Emperor his place should be filled by some other brilliant General. But he made such a display of active loyalty that the Emperor, satisfied by the results, once more placed entire confidence in him, and on the 29th of June doubled his powers. Crétet, the Minister of the Interior, having succumbed beneath the overwhelming burden of his position, the Emperor entrusted this important department for a few months to Fouché. The latter, therefore, had no reason for disloyalty, though he still had ample cause for uneasiness.

His anxiety was partly due to the threats of invasion by England, which was a matter of common talk in London. The English hoped to get into touch with the malcontents all along the coast. General Sarrazin, an old soldier of the Revolution, just at this juncture sent the following information to London: "All the best troops are scattered. . . . In Boulogne and Belgium

**An English  
Invasion  
Encouraged.**

the most important posts are guarded by recruits, who do not know how to load a gun. A landing should be made at Boulogne. Paris could be reached *via* Abbeville, Amiens and Beauvais without a shot being fired."

All this shows how dangerous the situation had become after Essling. Popular uprisings, coalitions of Kings, plots in Paris—everything was on the tiptoe of expectation. "They have all arranged to meet at my tomb, but do not dare to turn up," the Emperor had declared. Clearly, everything hung on the issue of one battle. If it proved to be another Essling, all was lost. But it was not another Essling; it was Wagram!

For sources and bibliography see the end of Chapter XXXII.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### WAGRAM AND THE PEACE OF VIENNA

The Emperor plans his revenge. The Army of Italy, after the victory of Raab, comes to join forces with him. He recrosses the Danube. First day : the Archduke, outflanked on his left, is attacked on the heights ; a misunderstanding puts a stop to this attack. Second day : The Archduke attacks and fails. The attempted manœuvre on his right also apparently fails. Masséna falls back and then recovers. Davout takes the heights of Wagram by storm. The Armistice of Znaym. Metternich hopes to secure a peace without penalties and an alliance with France. The conferences of Altenburg. Crisis in the Russian alliance. Anarchy in Spain. England prepares to make a landing, but does so too late on the island of Walcheren. Fouché takes drastic measures ; he orders a levy of the National Guard ; he is suspected of a great political intrigue. Bernadotte in Antwerp. Napoleon becomes uneasy. He imposes peace on Austria at Vienna. The Tsar embittered. Staps attempts to assassinate the Emperor.

**T**HE day after Essling there was no man in all Europe less perturbed than the Emperor. Never during the whole course of the great adventure constituting his life did he display greater mastery and coolness.

Since the enemy had not immediately driven him out of the island of Lobau, he would make it the base from which he would take his revenge. But this time he would see to it that his position was better secured. Certain that revenge was within his grasp, he had calmly reinstalled himself in Schönbrunn, after having filled the Austrian capital with stupefaction by the lofty serenity with which he passed through it in full state. He had made his plans. In the first place, between the right bank of the Danube and the island of Lobau, alongside the bridge of boats which was to be mended and strengthened, he ordered a huge bridge on piles to be built. Work on this was begun as early as the 1st of June. Thus did he intend to defy the caprices of the Danube.

His army was also growing in strength and numbers. Troops

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from Italy were coming to the rescue. On the 16th of May they had crossed the Carnic Alps, hot on the heels of the Archduke John in full flight, and the Viceroy, leaving Macdonald with 15,000 men to pursue the foe, marched the bulk of his troops, 30,000 men, in the direction of Vienna. Napoleon immediately ordered them to turn back on the Archduke John, whom he did not wish to join his brother Charles at Wagram. And Eugene, justifying the confidence reposed in him by the Emperor, attacked and defeated the former at Raab on the 14th of June. So great were the losses he inflicted on him that, even had he been able to rally, he would only have been able, like his brother, to provide a base of no very great importance. Eugene and Macdonald were followed by Marmont, who was also hurrying up with 10,000 seasoned veterans from Dalmatia. These various reinforcements raised Napoleon's depleted army to 150,000 men, with whom he felt confident of being able to defeat the 160,000 men he calculated his adversary had at his disposal.

Whether from fatigue or from lack of imagination, the Archduke Charles was meanwhile making no attempt to interfere with the Emperor's preparations. The great bridge was being completed, the troops were being drilled, and formidable batteries were being stationed on the island to protect the passage of men across the five small bridges, all the parts of which had been collected together.

From Schönbrunn Napoleon paid constant visits to superintend the work or to hold reviews. The *morale* of the troops was excellent; they were full of fire and enthusiasm and would have restored his confidence had he stood in need of it. His assurance inspired him with the determination to strike a dramatic blow which would provide all Europe with convincing proof of his power. And on the 17th of May he proudly flung the gauntlet in

the faces of all those who, after Essling, had imagined him to be done for. Dated from "our imperial camp in Vienna," he issued a proclamation announcing the annexation of the Roman States and the Eternal City to the Empire. From the capital of the Germanic Cæsars, the Emperor proclaimed that

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Rome, once and for all removed from the hands of the Pope, was to be the second capital of the new Charlemagne.

But, although Europe was indeed astounded, she still remained in a state of ferment. In Spain the Junta redoubled its efforts; the English pushed forward their preparations for a landing; the Tsar sent orders to his Generals to humour the Austrians; Italy turned her eyes to the Quirinal, from which the thunderbolts of excommunication were about to be hurled against the Emperor's head; in Berlin orders for mobilisation were being prepared; and lastly in Paris all the factions revived and got busy and intrigue and treachery set to work. Fouché, sore perplexed, turned the situation over in his mind. But on the 1st of July the French armies massed round Vienna began to stir, and on the 2nd and 3rd they collected in good order on the island of Lobau. The Emperor, who on the 2nd had crossed the main arm of the river on the solidly constructed bridge, was in their midst, gay, alert and self-confident. He knew that he was gambling with Fate. But had he not done so scores of times before and emerged victorious in the end? By the evening of the 4th his whole force of 100,000 men was on the island, together with 558 guns, this time fully supplied with ammunition.

Napoleon  
Musters  
His Army.

\* \* \* \* \*

Napoleon surmised that the Archduke, now installed on the Marchfeld, was awaiting him between Essling and Aspern. But this time he decided to take him by surprise on the left in the plain of Muhletten, which is an extension of the Marchfeld, and on to which the five little bridges would suddenly pour his 100,000 men in a few hours. Meanwhile, on his own left, in order to hold the enemy thus menaced with being outflanked, he would order the famous Aspern-Essling line to be attacked by Masséna's corps, deployed so as to outflank not only the left but also the right wing of the enemy.

The Archduke Charles was convinced that the battle could not spread to these heights, and on this occasion could picture it as being fought only in the plain. The hills running from Margraf-Neusiedel to Wagram, parallel to the Danube, form an elbow at

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Wagram, from which another little chain runs towards the river from Aderklau to Kagrau. It was from this point that the counter-offensive planned by the Archduke was to be launched. He calculated that the French troops would once again attack along the Aspern-Essling front, where he would offer a stout resistance which would weaken and wear them out. Meanwhile, having pushed forward in that direction, they would doubtless attempt to storm the Neusiedel-Wagram line, where they would find 75,000 men awaiting them. Another body of 65,000, occupying the Aderklau-Kagrau chain, would attack the assailants on the wing and they would thus be taken in the rear and routed; whereupon, the troops posted on the Neusiedel-Wagram line would abandon the defensive and launch an attack. Swooping down on to the plain, they would put the enemy to flight and sweep them before them. He felt certain of a brilliant victory.

Napoleon, as we know, was equally confident. On the 4th he concentrated his forces on the right of the island, from which they were to meet the Archduke's onslaught by crossing the bridges built at the end of the island, and entering, not the Marchfeld, but the plain of Muhletten. In spite of a terrific storm, the manoeuvres on the island were carried out with exemplary order. In the light of dawn the three corps under Oudinot, Davout and Masséna deployed in the plain, on the far left of the Austrians, as yet barely aware that they had crossed. The Emperor, who was already gaily galloping in the sunshine in the midst of his troops, was greeted with loud cheers. Meanwhile, still on the left of the enemy, the whole of the French forces were advancing, without meeting with any resistance, in the direction of the heights on which the Archduke had just woken up.

The Austrian corps under Klenau, which occupied the Aspern-Essling line, seeing its left wing thus outflanked from the very beginning, and menaced with being caught between the French, on the point of deploying in its rear, and the Danube, towards which it was facing, hurriedly fell back, thus abandoning without firing a shot the positions on the Marchfeld so carefully fortified for months past. Masséna, having taken up a strong position at Enzersdorf, the rest of the army pivoted round him and wheeled about in such orderly array that it might have been performing

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exercises on the parade ground. Behind these three corps the bridges were still pouring over troops, and a formidable second line was already beginning to deploy; on the left was Bernadotte, to

Brilliant  
French  
Advance.

the rear of Masséna; in the centre Marmont and the Bavarians behind Oudinot; to the right, behind Davout, the Army of Italy under Macdonald. The Guard and the cuirassiers surrounding the Emperor constituted the reserve. All this orderly mass seemed to move by clockwork. Suddenly, as though they were on the parade ground, the front-line corps moved away, and the second line advanced to take their places on an extended front. The artillery fired as it advanced, while on the wings the cavalry galloped swiftly through the standing corn with drawn swords—an irresistible movement of over 100,000 men, advancing like the blade of a gigantic sickle of which Masséna formed the handle.

By six o'clock the army had reached the foot of the heights, and having advanced five miles, was almost in touch with the bulk of the staggered Archduke's troops along a front of some eight to ten miles.

A stream known as the Russbach formed a trench at the foot of the hills, and ran parallel to them; but, to the west of Wagram, this rivulet turned north and the slight protection it afforded thus came to an end. This was the spot where the Austrian army formed an almost perfect right angle in the hollow of the hills. Here, too, lay its centre between Wagram and Aderklau, and this centre, forming an elbow, was comparatively weak. It was the Army of Italy, which had now entered the line, that was ordered to strike at this weak spot. Bernadotte, operating with the Saxon corps to the left of the Army of Italy, was to force Aderklau to capitulate, while Masséna, abandoning his temporary immobility, and advancing parallel to the Danube, although he was inferior in numbers, held the three corps forming the enemy's right. So favourably was the battle developing for the French that, as the July days were long, the Emperor had not abandoned hope of carrying off the victory during the three hours of daylight that remained.

He sent urgent orders in all directions. Oudinot, Macdonald and Bernadotte, crossing the Russbach after some hot fighting, were scaling the hills, and already the Austrian centre, though

## WAGRAM AND PEACE OF VIENNA

putting up a stiff resistance, was obviously beginning to give way beneath their fierce onslaught. It was just on the point of breaking when a lamentable incident occurred. The Army of Italy, with Oudinot in front of it on the right and Bernadotte on the left, reached the plateau just as the latter was on the point of deploying his Saxons. Taking these Saxon troops for Austrians the French suddenly opened fire on them, with the result that they imagined they had been taken in the rear by the enemy and turned tail, involving the whole of the Army of Italy in their perfectly comprehensible panic. True, order was quickly restored, but two hours had been wasted, and night was now falling. The magnificent opportunity of winning a swift victory without incurring heavy losses had eluded the Emperor's grasp, and the Archduke was temporarily saved.

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Surprised by this admirable attack on the part of the French, the latter had apparently been at his wits' end during the day of the 5th. But the respite he was granted allowed him to return, on the 6th, to his own plans for a counter-offensive. He issued his commands; the Austrian left was to be content with holding its ground behind the Russbach, which, in its pursuit of the fleeing Saxons and Italians, it had managed to regain. Meanwhile the Austrian right, from Aderklau to the Danube, was to make a flank attack on the enemy and keep him occupied. Charles intended this attack to take place long before sunrise, but the disorganised state of the Austrian army after the 5th was responsible for the orders taking three hours to reach his right wing.

Napoleon had also issued fresh instructions. The Army of Italy, with Marmont's and Bernadotte's corps, was to resume the attack on the Austrian centre interrupted on the previous evening, while Masséna was still to be content with holding the enemy's right. Meanwhile, Oudinot and Davout were to hurl themselves against the heights of Wagram-Neusiedel. Behind his centre, the Emperor still held such fine troops in reserve that, whatever happened, he felt they could not possibly involve him in defeat.

Moreover, the battle re-opened with a mistake on the part of the



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Austrians. Rosenberg, who was in command of the left wing, instead of remaining purely on the defensive, as Charles had ordered, hurled himself at dawn on Davout's corps on the other side of the Russbach.

**Rosenberg  
Repulsed.**

Davout, the illustrious Duke of Auerstädt, was Napoleon's most steadfast and determined lieutenant ; he repulsed the enemy and drove him back at the point of the sword. But, to the roar of the guns, fighting had been resumed at every point. On a front of ten miles, forming an elbow between Wagram and Aderklau, 300,000 men, supported by 1,100 pieces of artillery, were to confront each other—numbers hitherto unknown in military history.

Davout received orders to cross the Russbach and, together with Oudinot, who was on his left, to storm the heights opposite him. It was a serious undertaking, but Davout merely replied, "All right ! I will do my duty !" This was quite enough for Napoleon. He knew that the hills would be carried.

**Davout  
Storms the  
Heights.**

It was not here, however, that the main operation was to take place, but as usual in the centre, at the famous elbow between Aderklau and Wagram. And, as had been the case on the previous evening, Macdonald and Bernadotte were entrusted with the task of carrying it out. But it could not succeed unless Masséna, who still had only one corps on the French left, could succeed in holding three enemy corps for a few hours.

But, hardly had Davout again launched an attack on the French right when, just as Napoleon was on the point of hurling Macdonald against the Austrian centre, he received grave news from both Bernadotte and Masséna.

Bernadotte's Saxons, as the result of a mistake on the part of their leader, had abandoned Aderklau, with the result that Masséna was exposed and obliged to fall back.

As a matter of fact, Napoleon was surprised but not perturbed by the news from his left. He went there himself, and bracing Bernadotte with a few stern words, he rejoined Masséna. But the retreat which Bernadotte's mistake had forced Masséna to make had encouraged the Austrian corps, who had been held back for a long time, to push forward. Indeed, they had advanced so far that, driving the enemy before them, they had already occupied Aspern. If they succeeded in reaching Essling and Enzersdorf,

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the French army, cut off from the Danube, might have been faced with serious disaster.

"All the better!" Napoleon would have exclaimed a short while back. For, certain of breaking the Austrian centre, he would not, in the old days, have been altogether displeased to see the enemy's right being so far extended as to run the risk, if his centre were broken, of being suddenly turned and driven into the Danube. But the soldiers he now had under his command were not the men of Austerlitz. If they thought there was danger of being surrounded they might lose their heads. The Emperor was therefore obliged to abandon any very daring manœuvres and confine himself to less skilful operations. And he merely ordered

Masséna's  
Exploit. Masséna to recover all the ground along the Danube. "Sire!" exclaimed the old veteran,

"that means marching nearly six miles with my flank exposed!"—"Masséna!" retorted the Emperor, "you must go all the same!" It was a reply which was a challenge to the Marshal's pride and, determined to carry out his orders, he flung himself at the head of his troops: In less than two hours, under a hail of bullets, he had won back everything—he "had gone all the same!"

With his mind at rest, Napoleon had returned to the centre. He was determined to have done, and to strike a knock-out blow. Macdonald was to charge, to pierce and break through the enemy's line, shatter the elbow and destroy the whole of the enemy's front. But the Emperor could not now rely on his infantry alone, even under the leadership of a Macdonald and supported by the cavalry of a Nansouty. And he determined to open the way for them with a bombardment unprecedented in the annals of war.

Between eleven and half-past twelve, 102 guns were collected and placed in position. At midday Drouot gave the sign with his sword, and all along a front of nearly a mile these massed guns began to belch forth death. The hail of shot made great gaps in the Austrian centre, demolished their artillery, and mowed down their infantry. Beneath this vault of fire, the Army of Italy advanced to the attack, headed by Macdonald himself, cool and resolute. His two divisions were flanked by twenty-four squadrons of cuirassiers under Nansouty, who charged. The

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whole front was overthrown. The Austrians, driven back on to the hills, tried time and again to hold their ground. Their cavalry, endeavouring to retaliate, crumpled up against a wall of 3,000 bayonets, which, with nothing to stop them, advanced over the bodies of their fallen foes. Macdonald's line had been broken,

The Elbow  
Broken. and, to complete his task, he was demanding the support of more cavalry; but Bessières, who was in supreme command of it, having been wounded, it was too slow in arriving. Nevertheless, the elbow had been shattered.

Moreover, Masséna had returned to the offensive without having met with a single mishap, and was driving back the enemy's right wing. "We are faced with possible disaster," wrote the General in command of these harassed forces to the Archduke. In front of Masséna, Lasalle, almost drunk with exultation, was charging with his hussars, when he fell wounded by a bullet between his eyes. But his men broke through everywhere in a headlong charge.

Davout  
Takes the  
Heights. With his right wing falling back and his centre broken, the Archduke was in despair. One final blow put the finishing touch—Davout captured the heights and was swinging back on Wagram. If Charles delayed for another half-hour to give orders for retreat, his army would be cut in two and lost!

The Emperor still had a huge force at his command, and Davout, supported by Oudinot, was approaching Wagram. "The battle is won!" exclaimed the Emperor, though without any sign of exultation. The whole of the French line was now on the march, but, after three hours, it was merely following on the heels of the retreating foe. The Archduke was retiring with the remnants of his army.

It was all over! But what "butchery"! On the following day the word was on everybody's lips. The Austrians had lost 24,600 killed and wounded and 12,000 prisoners. But the victors had also paid for thirty-six hours of stubborn fighting with the most sanguinary losses. On the 6th alone they had had 26,772 killed and wounded, and the corps which were pursuing the enemy were in some cases reduced in number to barely one division.

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Napoleon was troubled and preoccupied. True, Wagram had added an incomparable page of glory to his military record. "It was a masterpiece of tactics!" wrote General Pellet, who was present. But in the thick of the fight the Emperor had received some rude shocks; the weakness of some of the elements in his own army and the new-found courage of the enemy came as a revelation to him. These changes had resulted in his success costing him so dear that even the victorious army had been dangerously weakened by it. And if he pursued the enemy it was with the firm determination to make it impossible for another battle to be fought. At Znaim, where, on the 11th of July, Marmont and Masséna had caught up Rosenberg's corps and again cut it to pieces, and whither the Emperor himself followed, he gave a cordial welcome to Prince Liechtenstein, who had been sent by Francis II to beg for an armistice. He had quite made up his mind to sign it. "There has been enough bloodshed!" he declared.

But although he welcomed Liechtenstein, he was determined to put the fear of God into him. He had decided to make Austria pay dearly for the war she had imposed upon him, and insisted that all the provinces, which his troops had merely crossed or entered, should be left in his hands as security. When the Austrian plenipotentiary protested, he threatened to set his troops in motion again. The Austrian gave way, and on the 12th of July the armistice was signed. On the 15th the Emperor once again made a victorious entry into Schönbrunn, fondly imagining that he would now have no further difficulty in laying down the law to Europe.

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But, to his intense surprise, Austria, in the first place, showed no signs of being terror-stricken or Europe of being depressed. Wagram was not Austerlitz. And nobody remained for long in ignorance of the price paid for the victory. It was even declared to have been a Pyrrhic victory. If Napoleon were forced to fight another Wagram he would have no army left. True, Austria was resolved to enter into negotiations, but she still had 200,000 men at her disposal. And, although Metternich, who had been made

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Chancellor, advised opening negotiations for peace, it was only because he thought it was better to husband the country's resources for the time being and postpone vengeance for a while.

When Metternich met Champagny, who had been sent to conduct the negotiations, he had no hesitation in laying before him

all the details of Russia's various acts of "treachery." "Include us in your system," was Metternich's Aim.

the conclusion he drew, "and you will then be sure of us. On that basis we will consent to make a peace honourable to ourselves and useful to you." After all, had not Tilsit been the result of Friedland? And could not an Austrian Tilsit be the result of Wagram?

Napoleon, however, had no intention of allowing himself to be manoeuvred. But Metternich was as slippery as an eel. He talked and argued and refused to give way, hoping that something that he had more or less foreseen would happen to force Napoleon to be more amenable.

The fact was, as I have already observed, that Europe, whom Wagram should have paralysed for months to come, was by no means terror-stricken. In the expectation that the Emperor would be defeated, all the Powers had made their own plans, and it was necessary for the victory itself to be consecrated by the signature of peace for them to resign themselves to abandoning them.

The Tsar himself, fully aware that he had been behaving extremely badly, had raked up various grievances. The incidents that had taken place in Galicia, he maintained, were due entirely to the overweening pretensions of the people of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, who were actually daring to proclaim their ambition to revive the Kingdom of Poland. The French, he added, were surreptitiously encouraging this aspiration, which was an insult and a menace to the successor of Catherine II. In this connection,

a tart note from Romanzoff had been sent too late—or possibly too early—and had cast a gloom over Napoleon just after Wagram. The Russian alliance was obviously on its last legs.

The  
Russian  
Alliance  
Menaced.

Ever since Essling the King of Prussia had found himself less and less able to resist the pressure of those who were urging him to join

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the crusade against Napoleon. And he sent an agent to St. Petersburg, and another to Vienna, as a proof that he would be ready to take up arms against France, provided the European coalition promised at least to guarantee him the restitution of all he had possessed before Jena.

A further reason which prevented the Emperor from reaping all the benefit he should have done from Wagram was the still calamitous state of affairs in Spain. Ney and Soult, exasperated with one another, were openly at loggerheads. Moreover, King Joseph, flagrantly disregarded by the High Command, was making frantic attempts to induce them to obey him. Owing to his tergiversations he had prevented Victor from putting an end to the insurrectionary Junta in Andalusia, and when Wellesley,

having reconquered Portugal, presented himself on the frontiers of Spain, he also paralysed Soult, who had at first made up his mind to attack the English. Eventually, when he did allow the Marshal to attack them at Talavera, he stopped the battle just when the enemy was on the point of being crushed, thus turning a victory into an indecisive engagement, and although he sent Soult in pursuit of Wellesley, he became nervous and stopped him almost immediately.

The English, who with a little more determination could have been cleared out of Spain, were highly elated by these dubious "victories." And yet there was some ground for their attitude, for in their position it actually was a triumph to have succeeded in holding their own at all costs in the Peninsula against 300,000 of Napoleon's soldiers. And full of pride and exultation, they were preparing another blow and arranging for the famous "landing" which all Europe had been expecting before Wagram, and which the Chancelleries were of opinion would change the whole face of affairs, even after Napoleon's victory.

Had it been carried out in May or June the landing would, indeed, have constituted a grave complication for Napoleon. As a matter of fact, it should have taken place in the early summer, but England is always slow to move, since she makes a point of never setting out until she is fully equipped in every detail.

On the 29th of July the English vessels arrived at the mouth

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of the Scheldt, and landed 40,000 red-coats on the Island of Walcheren. The latter immediately marched on the English Land in Flushing, which defends the mouth of the river and Walcheren. the approach to Antwerp.

Flushing was under the command of an aged General and defended by third-rate troops. As for Admiral Missiessy, who was cruising along the coast, all that he had been able to do on the approach of the enemy was with some difficulty to reach Antwerp, whither the English Admiral intended to pursue him as soon as Flushing had fallen.

The news reached Paris on the evening of the 19th. Fouché, through secret reports from his agents in London, was the only man prepared for it. Wagram had confirmed his loyalty to the Emperor, and he made up his mind to exploit the crisis that was about to occur in order to play a leading part, which would place him in a safe position, whatever happened.

As soon as he heard of the landing he prevailed upon Cambacérès to consent to a Ministerial Council being called for the 31st, at which he intended to make him adopt a whole carefully thought out plan of defence, which he considered most important. There was to be a grand levy of the National Guard, to be extended, if necessary, to all parts of the coast; and a

Fouché  
Takes  
Drastic  
Measures. "civic army" was to be raised and placed under the command of one of the great Generals. The man he had in mind was Bernadotte, who had just been sent back to France from Vienna by the

Emperor, on account of his unsatisfactory behaviour at Wagram. He was immediately to march his troops into the Netherlands. Everything was to be carried out with the utmost possible speed. The Ministers were thunderstruck. They were good executive officials, but habit and fear of the Master had made them incapable of carrying out extraordinary measures. Cambacérès opposed the suggestions made by the Minister of Police at two successive meetings, and succeeded in having them rejected. "Monsieur Fouché," he declared, "I have no wish to lose my head, I can tell you!"

Apparently, Fouché was not troubled by any such fear; for, dispensing with the advice of these trembling and terrified officials, as well as of the Master's authorisation, he took advantage

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of his position, as head of two Government departments, in order to send immediate instructions to fifteen Prefects to call up the National Guard. The peremptory and at the same time inflammatory tone he adopted was almost reminiscent of 1793, and very soon all the departments in the north-east of France were in arms. The other Ministers endeavoured to oppose this mass levy, and when, obviously at Fouché's command, Bernadotte offered to place his sword at their disposal, they refused. Possibly they felt that the man might be dangerous, and they may have had a vague presentiment that Fouché had some secret designs of his own for pushing him forward, as he had done Murat a short while previously. Repulsed by the Council, Bernadotte remained in Paris, biding his time.

Napoleon had been informed through his Ministers of all that had taken place. He always appreciated a spirit of determination

**Napoleon  
Approves of  
Fouché's  
Action.**

wherever he encountered it. Now Fouché had been the only man to show proof of possessing it, and he approved of his action. As for Bernadotte, although he did not like him, he had always shown him consideration, and his help seemed useful.

Thus, the whole of his wrath fell upon the heads of his Ministers, whose pusillanimity had almost paralysed the movement set on foot by Fouché. "The Minister of Police is the only man who did what he could," wrote the Emperor, "and saw the folly of remaining in a state of inactivity both dangerous and dishonourable." It was necessary "to disgust the English with these expeditions and to let them see that France was ever ready to take up arms again." At all events, he added, anything was better than for a Minister "to allow himself to be surprised in his bed by the English." Furthermore, he assumed an attitude of supreme indifference towards the subject of the English landing in Walcheren, declaring that they would perish there of inanition and disease. But he approved of Fouché's action in seizing the opportunity to rouse the country against them.

The Minister of Police, puffed up with pride, was playing the part of a veritable dictator, and it was inevitable that after having won the praise of the Master he should promptly meet with his disapproval. Without waiting for orders from Schönbrunn, he suddenly ordered a further levy of the National Guard, extending



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to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean coasts, which gave rise to a

**Levy of the  
National  
Guard.**

“revival of Republican activity.” In Paris also there was a similar levy of which Fouché placed his own friends in command. When some of the Mayors raised objections, he replied tartly that

“an accident might happen in Germany, and that he was extremely glad to have a body of the National Guard in Paris.” The Ministerial Council, humiliated by Napoleon’s strictures, were filled with disgust and anxiety by the dictatorship assumed by a colleague whom they suspected of being animated by dangerous secret motives. And complaints poured into Schönbrunn.

They were also pouring into Antwerp, where Bernadotte, who had eventually been sent there at the Emperor’s command, was also playing the proconsul. He now had a regular army under him five times larger than was required to drive out the English.

**Bernadotte  
in Antwerp.**

The latter had succeeded in taking Flushing, but, in view of the resistance organised against them, did not dare to march on Antwerp. As the

Emperor had foreseen, they were dying of fever in the insanitary island of Walcheren, and the display of force made by the Prince of Ponte Corvo seemed all the more exaggerated and consequently suspect.

Napoleon was beginning to get alarmed, and as was always the case, his feelings, like his thoughts, soon found expression. On being informed of the levy of the National Guard in the south, he declared that he could not understand it. “What the devil are they going to do with all that?” he wrote to Fouché. “The

**Napoleon  
Uneasy:**

slightest incident may provoke a crisis.” Soon mistrust gave way to astonishment and then to sullen rage. But the rebuff received by the Eng-

lish, who were on the point of taking ship again, remained a source of satisfaction, and also, if the truth were known, the manifestation of the country’s resolute and determined attitude, which Fouché had been quite right in thinking would impress Europe and destroy Austria’s last hopes.

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The negotiations opened on the 18th of August at Altenburg between Metternich and Champagny were dragging. As Napoleon

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Negotiations  
at  
Altenburg.

showed no signs of reducing his demands, the Austrian Minister had been living in hope that something would happen in Europe to force him to modify them. But he had been disappointed.

General Bubna, who had been sent by the unfortunate Emperor Francis to try to induce Napoleon to give way, took his departure in disgust, and the Emperor of the French immediately presented his ultimatum to Metternich through Champagny. Austria was to cede large districts in Carniola, Carinthia, Croatia, Istria and Trieste, with a population of 1,680,000 souls; a population of 1,500,000 in Austria itself was to be handed over to the German Princes in alliance with France; 200,000 in Galicia were to be divided between the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and the Tsar, who would thus be given far more than he deserved. On the 16th of September Champagny communicated these demands to Metternich, who was filled with despair.

But Austria was obliged to resign herself; the spirit of Europe was at last broken. As for Spain, Napoleon had restored order there. He had placed the whole of the military power in the hands of Soult, almost subjecting the humiliated King to his orders. But he was sending troops to Spain, whom he promised to join himself before long, to put an end to the insurrection and drive Wellesley into the sea.

And it was precisely because he was anxious to take command on the other side of the Pyrenees that he eventually showed himself disposed to be more lenient to Austria. He received Liechtenstein, who had been sent to Schönbrunn as plenipotentiary, and modified his demands, contenting himself with the Illyrian provinces and part of Galicia, and also reduced the war indemnity from 134 millions to eighty-five. Austria signed forthwith on the 14th of October. She accepted the amended conditions and undertook to reduce her army to 150,000 men. This was the Treaty of Vienna.

The  
Treaty of  
Vienna.

It still remained a terrible peace for the House of Habsburg. Nevertheless, Metternich did not seem to be depressed by it. He did not despair of one day taking his revenge and of shortly seeing an unexpected advantage arise from the very treaty his country had just signed; in fact, he hoped it would lead to a further cooling of the Franco-Russian alliance.

## CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

And he was right. The article in the treaty dealing with Galicia proved a source of great annoyance to the Tsar, and that was fatal. Far from handing over Galicia to him, or even the greater part of the province, Napoleon had given him only one or two cantons, four-fifths of the conquered territory being destined for the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, the very existence of which stank in Alexander's nostrils. Through the medium of his Chancellor, he demanded the drawing up of a proper convention on the subject of the Polish problem, the only means, wrote Romanzoff, of preventing the treaty from sowing "the seeds of a new war." The subject was discussed for six months.

**The Tsar  
Embittered.**

And, indeed, "the seeds of a new war" were already there. Furthermore, they lay dormant in the general situation created by the Treaty of Vienna. As it had now become impossible for Austria ever to bar the way to French hegemony, Napoleon and Alexander found themselves face to face in the presence of a weak and enfeebled Europe. And it was almost inevitable that some day they should fall out. Metternich was ready to do anything—as he proved before three months had passed—to widen the rift, the existence of which, with his usual perspicacity, he clearly perceived in the Franco-Russian alliance.

Nevertheless, Napoleon took his departure well satisfied with the way the Austrian difficulty had been settled, and persuaded that, this time, the whole of Europe had been subjugated. And yet he had just received a warning. On the 12th of October, when he was holding a review at Schönbrunn, attended by the whole of Vienna, a young man pretended he wished to hand him a petition. He was seized and found to be armed with a large knife. He was a Saxon student named Staps, who was filled with fanatical hatred of the Emperor. Napoleon insisted on questioning the "little wretch" himself. "He did not seem to know much about Brutus," he wrote to Fouché. No! he was not a Brutus, an excitable reader of Plutarch, like so many others.

**Staps  
Tries to  
Assassinate  
Napoleon.**

He was something much worse—he had been born of the exasperation of a country, a race, a people, a whole era. Napoleon would probably have pardoned a "Brutus," but he felt it was necessary, by making an example of the fellow, to discourage

## WAGRAM AND PEACE OF VIENNA

German intrigues. "A little wretch," yes! But at that moment he shone with the reflected glory of a symbol. Kings fell prostrate at the feet of the tyrant, but from Spain to Germany the peoples were already rising up, and the man who had conquered Kings would find himself unable to overcome their subjects.

Nevertheless, the incident seemed insignificant, and on the 15th of October Napoleon set out on his return journey to Paris more light-hearted than he had ever been before.

**SOURCES.** Works already mentioned by Bailieu and Polotsoff. *Correspondance de Napoléon*, XVIII, XIX. Boucher de Perthes, *Lettres (Revue Napoléonienne*, 1901). Memoirs or Reminiscences by Roederer, Madame de Chastenay, Général de Pelleport, the volunteer Barrès, Thibaudeau, Ségur (III), and Jullian. Fiévée, *Lettres*, II. Coignet, *Cahiers*.

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